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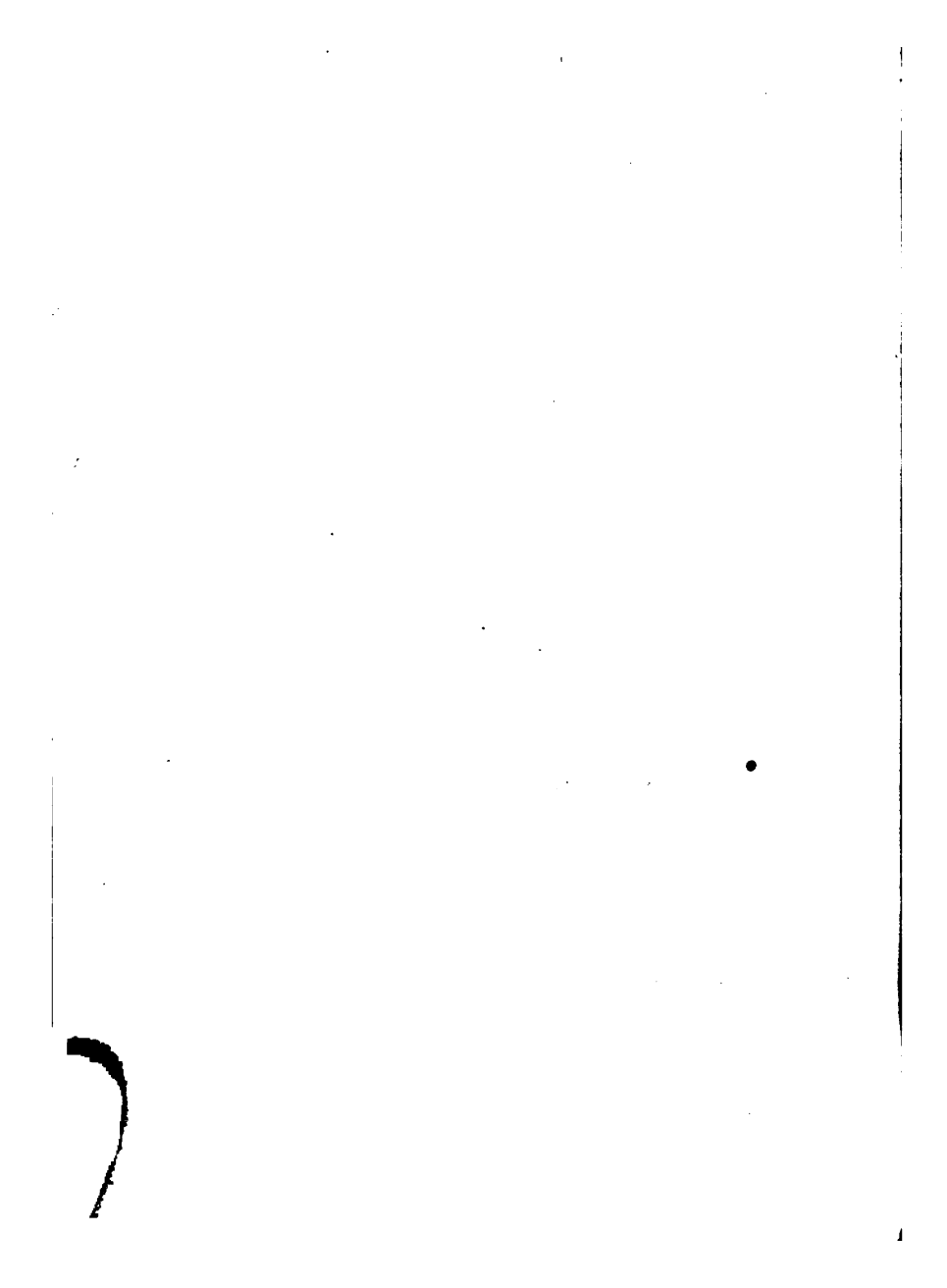
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HER LADYSHIP.

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"If thou still art true
I will be constant, too,
And will wed none but you,
Robin Adair!"

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HER LADYSHIP.

CHAPTER I.

Introduces an Ancient Family of Virginia.

It was a rainy morning at Castle Belvoir. The monotonous drip-drop of falling water pattering on the tiled roof, and tumbling in steady streamlets from the o'erflowing cornice-gutters, striking the pavement of the court-yard below with dull-sounding splashes, was the only noise disturbing a perfect solitude, if we except the occasional twittering of certain wet and weather-beaten swallows, which, ever and anon, fluttered out from the ivy that clung to the castle's walls, and, hanging suspended in mid-air for a moment, once more sought the kindly shelter of the overhanging eaves.

Back of the castle, a range of the Blue Ridge Mountains loomed upward, the lofty peaks lost in white clouds of drizzly mist. Below, and in front, as far as the eye could reach in the haze that half obscured the view, lay a beautiful valley, dotted, here and there, with farm-houses. Dimly visible to the left, the church spires and straggling outskirts of a small town, Greenwich Court

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House, were noticeable. Through this valley, the Shenandoah river dashed angrily along, its high waters raging within a pair of tawny banks, looking in the distance like an enormous orange-colored serpent, gliding with many tortuous turnings and sinuous twistings among the green fields, until hidden from sight by an out-cropping spur of the mountains.

Belvoir Castle, for so it was called by the people of the surrounding country, had originally been built in the year 1750. Twenty-four years later, the house was almost destroyed by fire, communicated, it is supposed, by sparks from the camp-fires of troops bivouacked near, who, under command of my Lord Dunsmore, were on their way to punish some hostile tribes of Indians in the far off western wilderness. Fortunately, the main building was saved, and afterwards remodelled by some of the heirs of its former owner, Lord Thomas Fairfax. At the time our story opens, 1863, the castle, notwithstanding its age, was still a very handsome and imposing structure. Facing the West, and perched high above the valley, it occupied one of the most charming and picturesque sites in the county.

In June, 1863, the family residing at Belvoir Castle consisted of Lillian Fairfax, heiress of the castle, Madam Janet Flournoy, Lillian's aunt and guardian, and Jacques Flournoy, son of Madam Flournoy and cousin to Miss Fairfax. A few negro house-servants, still remained at the old homestead. Two years prior to this time, the blacks on the Fairfax place could only have

been numbered by the score. These had, however, almost all quitted the plantation—taking flight across the Maryland border, over into Pennsylvania (“Massa Lin-kum’s land”), or entering service, as “contrabands,” in various Federal camps, there to remain, until the terrible civil conflict, then shaking the continent, should have closed.

Janet Flournoy, *nee* Michaux, was the sister of Lillian’s mother. A descendant of the old Huguenot family of that name, she still preserved all their ancient traits of character. Gentle by birth, she was not of gentle nature. A staunch and uncompromising Protestant, she had a holy horror of the Church of Rome. It is related of her, that on the eve of every anniversary of St. Bartholomew’s day, she arrayed herself in deepest mourning, in remembrance of those of her ill-fated Huguenot ancestors, who had been slain by order of the wicked Medici.

The night of each anniversary of that memorable massacre, she spent in prayers for her departed kinsmen’s souls, a custom followed by the Flournoy family since remote generations. Aside from such eccentricity as arose from her peculiar religious notions, Aunt Janet was a woman of the best impulses. To be sure, she had the reputation of being close, and some of the people at Greenwich Court House said, “stingy.” She was accumulative and thrifty, like almost all the descendants of the French immigrants to Virginia have ever been. This charge of stinginess against her, on the part of certain envious neighbors, was altogether unmerited. Aunt

Janet distributed her charities in a quiet way; her name was very seldom seen among the list of church contributors published in the *Bugle*, the only weekly journal in the county.

"Charity commences at home," the old lady was wont to say — "There's the Ashbys, Lecounts, and Clancys — why, if they give a spring-chicken or a cast-off balmoral, in aid of the Chinese missions, down go their names in the *Bugle*, and they all half-starve their niggers."

Aunt Janet was an amiable woman, so long as she had her own way, but woe to any person who undertook to interfere with her pet plans. She ruled her black retainers on the estate with a certain degree of kindness, doctoring and nursing the sick, and praying with the dying. Once a month, the Rev. Braxton Lewis, rector of All-Innocents church, came up from town and preached to the slaves. His sermon from the text "Servants obey your masters," was much admired by Aunt Janet, and that worthy lady obliged him to preach it, at least once a year. The wickedness of the Romish church was duly pointed out, and the hell awaiting all worshipers of wooden images and waxen saints, was depicted in glowing colors.

On one occasion, not long before the war, Epsy, a black wench on the plantation, had strayed, like a lost sheep, from the woolly fold, becoming a convert of Father Patrick Burke's, pastor of All-Saint's, the only Catholic church in the county. This fact struck alarm and terror to the hearts of Braxton Lewis and Aunt Janet.

"Niggers are like sheep," said the old lady. "If one jumps the fence, the rest are sure to follow." So she used moral suasion, in the shape of a hickory stick, on Epsy, in the fond but delusive hope of causing a change of heart in the girl. Sad to say, the wicked wench remained obdurate, and, after numerous consultations with the rector of All-Innocents, Aunt Janet resolved to sell the black heretic, and send her South to pick cotton. On the day of the sale, Epsy had been bid in at a high figure, by some unknown party, and when the bill of sale was made out and signed, it was discovered that the negress had become the property of the Rev. Patrick Burke. Shortly afterward the girl disappeared, and it was noised around that the priest had freed her, and sent her to Philadelphia. All this caused much excitement at Greenwich Court House. The *Bugle*, in its next issue, had a long editorial, written by its highly talented editor, Colonel Caxton Blow. This gentleman made the discovery that Father Patrick Burke was a Yankee—"Although born in County Sligo, Ireland, there is strong reason for thinking the grandfather of this nigger-thief of a priest was born in New England. Let Father Burke beware how, in the future, he tampers with the affairs of the citizens of this grand old commonwealth. The people of Virginia will crush with an iron heel the next jesuitical scoundrel who attempts to kidnap her negroes," etc. So read the editorial in the *Bugle*.

In a few months, the affair was forgotten by all, save

the parties most directly interested, but a coolness sprung up between Lewis, Blow, and Madam Flournoy, on the one hand, and Rev. Patrick Burke, on the other. They no longer bowed when they met. It was noticeable that All-Saints church made quite a number of black converts shortly afterward; it was owing to this circumstance that the rector of All-Innocents was able to see the workings of the church of Rome in the matter, and ever after, Father Burke was considered a plotting Jesuit.

In personal appearance, Janet Flournoy was short and stout; her features were regular, though warped and wrinkled by the ravages of time. She had a brunette complexion, and a bright pair of sharp black eyes; hair, which was snow-white, and worn puffed up on either side of her forehead. In her time, Aunt Janet had been the belle of Fauquier county, and she was never weary of talking of her flirtations and conquests, when a maiden. According to her own story, she had rejected matrimonial offers from almost all the leading gentry of north-eastern Virginia.

Colonel Flournoy had fought two duels on her account, before she had consented to marry him; and what an unhappy marriage it had been; both high-spirited, they had quarrelled a week after the wedding. Fond of fox-chasing, cards, dice, and the bottle, no wonder that Colonel Flournoy was not long-lived. Within five years after the honeymoon, Janet Flournoy was a widow, having had but one child, a son, Jacques Flournoy. The little patrimony Aunt Janet brought to her husband on

their wedding day, was all squandered, and, at his death, she was left in comparative poverty. About that time, Carter Fairfax, Esq., the wealthy planter and owner of the Fairfax estates, who was her brother-in-law, invited Aunt Janet to make his house her future home, which kindly offer she promptly accepted.

Two years subsequent to this time Lillian's mother died, and, shortly afterwards, Carter Fairfax was found dead in his bed with a pistol-wound in his temple. The suicide left a single letter, in which he stated the cause inducing the rash act was grief at the death of his wife. In this same letter, he confided his daughter to the care of his beloved sister-in-law. On opening the will, it was found that Lillian was the heiress of the estate, with the exception of a small farm in Georgia, which was willed to his nephew, Jacques Flournoy. Aunt Janet was made sole guardian to the trust.

Meantime, Jacques had graduated with high honors at the Mary and William College, and, at the death of his uncle Carter, returned home. Within forty-eight hours after the burial of Mr. Fairfax, it was known to the gossips of Greenwich Court House, that Madam Flournoy had made her son overseer and manager of the estate. The towns-people smiled over their tea, and the charge of nepotism against Aunt Janet was freely indulged in. Some ill-natured persons even went so far as to declare that the old lady intended to marry her son to Miss Lillian, and, in this way, transfer the property to the Flournoys. It was admitted on all

hands, that Jacques Flournoy had been extremely fortunate.

Mrs. Blow, wife of Colonel Blow, of the *Greenwich Bugle*, congratulated Jacques on his approaching nuptials with the heiress, an episode not at all relished by the young gentleman, who reported the circumstance to his mother, whereupon, that worthy lady ordered out the buggy, and drove to town in a terrible passion. A violent quarrel occurred at the Blow mansion between the colonel's wife and Aunt Janet, in which the former came off second best. It required the combined efforts of Rev. Braxton Lewis, and the editor of the *Bugle*, to patch up the matter, as the affair created quite a row in All-Innocent's church, and, at one time, threatened to involve the entire congregation; both ladies being members of high standing, and having warm partisan friends to side with them.

Time rolled on, and under the careful management of Madam Flournoy and her son, the Fairfax estate was vastly improved; new lands were added to the already broad stretch of acres, and every foot of ground was cultivated. Large crops of tobacco were yearly sent to Richmond and Baltimore, returning handsome profits. All was smiling peace and plenty, when, in April, 1861, the first gun was fired at Sumter, and the men of the "North" and "South" sprang to arms—Jacques was one of the first to respond to the call of his native State. Born and bred in Virginia, he inherited that love of "States rights," so strikingly characteristic of the men in that section of the country.

He left home and went to Richmond, where he offered his services to the Governor of the Old Dominion, and, in due course of time, received the command of a company of cavalry. During the earlier skirmishes of the war he escaped unscathed, and after the battle of Bull Run, was promoted to the position of colonel. On March 1st, 1863, he encountered the Federal General Stanley, who, with two regiments of Ohio cavalry, was then in the neighborhood of Bradyville, Tennessee. A desperate fight took place, during which Colonel Flournoy singled out a Federal officer and engaged him in mortal combat. Being an excellent swordsman, Jacques Flournoy thought he could disable his antagonist in short order. He made a grave mistake, however, for in less time than it takes to narrate the incident, the left arm of Colonel Flournoy, was almost cut in two, while a sabre slash, on the crown of his head, laid him senseless on the field.

When he again became conscious, it was to find himself a prisoner in a Nashville hospital. A few days later, gangrene of the wounded limb set in, and amputation above the elbow was performed. Convalescing rapidly after the operation, the colonel was released on parole, and money having been furnished him by brother Masons, for he was a member of that order, he secured passage home, by way of the Ohio River, and Baltimore Rail Road. On reaching Harper's Ferry, he found a horse and colored servant awaiting his arrival, and in a few hours, reached Clark county, where he met with a warm but tearful welcome.

His mother wept bitterly over her boy, as how many other mothers wept during those cruel, cruel years. In her grief, however, she had one consolation; Jacques' life had been spared. After the first outburst of grief had subsided, there arose in the bosom of Aunt Janet a feeling of strong maternal pride. Had not Jacques, her gallant, noble boy, been disabled in the service of his native State? Had he not shown himself to be a true Flournoy, chivalrous and brave, as had been his Huguenot ancestors, when, on the plains of sunny France they had followed the white plumes of Navarre, where the fray was fiercest and the conflict most sanguinary? So kneeling at his feet, encircled by the strong right arm of their bronzed and weather-beaten warrior, the silvery-haired mother and the golden-locked Lillian thanked God for bringing Jacques home to them again.

Happiness, indeed; for how many many of their friends had lost fathers, sons and kinsmen, whose torn and mangled bodies lay buried beneath the blood-stained sod of Virginia's hills and valleys. Ah! those were the sad and gloomy days in the Old Dominion.

Jacques Flournoy was not unmoved at the devotion of these two women. A feeling of regret arose in his heart, that he had entered the Confederate service, and for the space of two years, left those nearest and dearest to him, alone and unprotected. This feeling he quickly crushed within him, his honor had demanded this sacrifice of self, and, after all, his honor was dearer to him than mother or cousin fair. If a painful twinge within his

half-empty sleeve, at that moment, recalled to memory the loss he had sustained, Jacques Flournoy stifled the rising groan, compressed his thin, bloodless lips, and sighed: "Virginia! Dear Virginia, 'twas for you." Loving the State as if it had been a sweetheart, wife or mistress, with a warm, full, heartfelt affection. Oh! the delusion, the snare, the deceit of the Lorley "States rights," which lured so many brave and tender hearts to their death.

The day after the arrival of Colonel Flournoy at Belvoir Castle was spent by that gentleman in riding over the estate. Two years of war had left their rude marks on the plantation. Numerous white ash-heaps, scattered here and there, showed the former camping grounds of Federal and Confederate who, alternately, had scoured the country on their scouts and predatory raids. Where, formerly, the long line of cabins, occupied by the negro field-hands stood, there were now only masses of charred and blackened timbers, half hidden by the luxuriant verdure of the Virginia creeper, which kindly tried to cover up all this ruin with its tendrils and ivy-like leaves. Not a fence was left on the place.

The meadow, once the colonel's pride, in which a fine drove of Alderney cattle were wont to browse, was overgrown by weeds and underbush. The poor, mild-eyed kine, had long since been confiscated by the hungry troops, stationed from time to time, at Greenwich Coult House. Amidst all this scene of destruction, the castle stood out, with its handsome shrubbery and well-kept

lawn, an oasis, blooming in its spring attire, in that wide waste of desolation. Belvoir Castle had been alike respected by both sides; for it was known at Federal headquarters, that the only occupants of the mansion were two ladies, who, with a few aged colored house-servants, simply asked to be let alone. When the Confederates were in possession of the valley, as was sometimes the case, the fact that the castle was the family residence of a Confederate officer, caused its inmates to be left unmolested. In this respect, then, the house of Fairfax had been extremely fortunate. Colonel Flournoy dismounted from his horse, and climbed to a high knoll of land overlooking the plantation. Glancing about him for a moment, a quiet smile of satisfaction overspread his face: "Not so bad, after all," murmured the gallant gentleman. "The castle is left, and the land will be more fertile than ever, after its long rest. The mountains are full of timber, and, with the return of the negroes, after the war, new cabins shall be built, new fences put up, and the fields once more cultivated—one or two good crops of tobacco will put us on our feet again." So, whistling to himself in a cheery sort of way, Jacques Flournoy descended from the knoll, and mounting his horse after some difficulty, for he had not yet become used to the loss of his arm, the colonel made his way homeward with a lighter heart than he had known for many a day, reaching the castle just in time to miss the drenching rain-storm that burst over, and deluged the valley shortly afterward. All that afternoon and night the water poured down in

torrents, until the country was flooded. Rivulets became small creeks; creeks became small rivers; while the grand old Shenandoah went booming along with its mad, roaring waves, Potomac-ward.

'Twas the morning following this storm, that Lady Lillian stood pensively gazing from the drawing-room window on the dreary outlook beyond. She tried, in vain, to see, through the drizzling mist, what flag was waving over the Greenwich court-house; for it was nothing unusual for the Federals to occupy the town one day; the Confederates the next. She opened the window. The moist, cool air was chilling. "Perhaps the Yankees have left, and I can go to town with Aunt Janet to-day," thought her ladyship. Suddenly, the clear, plaintive notes of a cornet rang out from the valley below, and the rock-ribbed mountain sides sent back the faint, musical echoes of "Robin Adair." What a mysterious influence that simple air seemed to have on Miss Lillian. The dreamy eyelids opened wider; the red lips parted slowly, and she held her breath as if in fear of breaking the spell that enchanted her. As the last sweet notes were wafted up from the valley below, the words of that old-time ballad were ringing in her ears:

"If thou still art true,
I will be constant too,
And will wed none but you,
Robin Adair!"

Lillian waited a moment, but nothing more was heard

from the unknown musician ; then she closed the window, and going to a sofa in one corner of the room, threw herself down, burying her face in the soft satin cushion. What a flood of sunny recollections came crowding into the little head ensconced there. She went back in memory to four years before, when she had been a happy girl at Madame Bonbon's Select School, in New York City ; and no young lady who ever went to Madame's school, has anything but a pleasing remembrance of that charming educational institution, I am sure. Why had Lillian been so happy when there ? That's a question the young woman could scarcely have answered herself.

At the age of fifteen, when a change comes o'er the spirit of the child, and she is a child no longer ; when the roseate dawn of glorious womanhood is ushered in, with its day dreams, its poetry, its sentiment ; when the book becomes tiresome, unless Cupid lurks beneath its perfumed leaves, and the heart is educated rather than the mind ; when the bright eyes look longingly into the far off future, and the red lips smile, as if in answer to an angel's whisper ; when love is the dominant passion, and affection is lavishly bestowed on all things animate and inanimate. 'Then—then it was, that Lillian had had a little experience, such as almost all girls have had. She had built an air-castle, and, as usual, an ideal man had been put therein—a man dearly beloved by her, who in turn fairly adored her—she was in Paradise then, and was satisfied with the little heaven her own

imagination had created. Now, in reality, this air-castle was constructed on a few grains of fact, but its gothic towers and shadowy battlements had no foundation but fancy. A young man, named Robert Atkins, boarded opposite Madame Bonbon's school. There was nothing unusual about Mr. Atkins, that marked him from the average run of young men of that especial period, unless it may have been that he was quite a fine musician. He was passably good-looking; smoked cigars; did not object to a glass of wine; liked to drive out on Harlem Lane, when he was flush enough to hire a fast trotter; played billiards, sometimes; was fond of going to the old Bowery Theatre, once in a while; in fact, he was quite an ordinary young fellow; being, for the rest, a student at Columbia College. But to the eyes of Miss Lillian, this man seemed different from other men; if she had had a personal acquaintance with him, it might have been otherwise, but she did not even know his name, nevertheless, she made him her hero, elevated him on a pedestal, then, woman-like, adored her idol.

How often, when taking their early morning walk up Fifth Avenue, had the young ladies of Madame Bonbon's been stricken by the smiles of this deceitful Bob. Yes, he smiled on all of them, as he passed on his way down town, and each particular girl thought the smile was for her. Our Bob had little or no sentiment at that time; his mind was mostly occupied in the study of mining engineering during the day, and when evening came, he enjoyed himself in a variety of ways. One thing that

Bob was fond of, was music. He was a superb performer on the flute and cornet, and, I think, to this fact alone may be attributed the influence he possessed over the young ladies at Madame Bonbon's. In the meantime, it is only just to the young man to say, that he was wholly unaware of the favorable impression he had made on Madame's pupils. Bob Atkins knew none of the young ladies, and cared nothing for any of them; on the other hand they all loved him. Little did Bob Atkins think of the delighted audiences he had on his concert nights. When Madame Bonbon's school was veiled in darkness, and the young lady inmates were supposed to be safe in bed and asleep, quite a contrary state of affairs existed.

It is sad to relate, that each latticed window was converted into an opera box for the time being, and many a miss caught a bad cold while listening to those open-air concerts. Since Orpheus charmed the beasts of the field with his music, and even the fishes were delighted by the false notes of Arion, it is not at all astonishing that the young ladies of Madame Bonbon's should be entranced by the flute-playing of Mr. Bob Atkins; for our Bob was a much better musician than any of those mythological old fogies. So like another Apollo he played divinely, and the muses, in the shape of Madame's pupils, sang to his music; singing very low to be sure, for fear of awaking the Argus-eyed Bonbon, who snored out a basso-profundo from her room, adjoining the young ladies' dormitory.

It was then that Apollo sat in his shirt sleeves, in the

third story front room of his boarding house, opposite Madame Bonbon's, and with a full glare of gas shining on his disordered hair, played away, and, in the interludes, sent volumes of tobacco smoke heavenward, as he fumbled over his sheet music, in total ignorance and innocence of the responsive chords he had touched and awakened in the hearts of Madame's cherubs. Oh! happy, happy Arcadia! Thou art now located in the sentimental confines of "Select Schools" for young ladies, and Cynthia, Phillis, Chloris, and Amaryllis now dwell in brown-stone fronts. So the girls all raved and were desperate over Bob, not knowing his name, or whence he came. All romance must have an ending, and even so it was in this case, for one bright April morning, while returning from their usual walk, the young ladies saw a cab pass them. Seated in this modern chariot was our hero, a large trunk was perched up by the driver, painted on the end of which were the cabalistic symbols, R. A., Toledo, O.

The musician had graduated, and was on the way to his home in the West. He smiled a most bewitching smile to the young ladies as he passed, and then, think of the impudence of the fellow, threw them a parting kiss from the tips of his fingers. Apollo had left his third story room forever! All that week a profound gloom o'erhung Madame Bonbon's School. Quite a number of girls were seriously ill, and Madame became so alarmed that she called in her family physician, to investigate the causes leading to this epidemic of melan-

choly among her pupils. Dr. Bleuepille discovered the cause to be poisoning from sewer-gas, arising from defective drainage. This eminent sanitarian even went so far as to publish the full particulars of the strange epidemic in a medical journal. He received numerous congratulations from his professional *confreres*, for his scientific astuteness in solving the mystery of this most singular of out-breaks. In a few days the most violent symptoms of this new affection had subsided. Nevertheless, in the heart of one girl, Lillian Fairfax, was left an impression never afterwards effaced.

This young lady had been in love, without knowing why; and the innocent recipient of her love, did not even know her—or care for her. So it was the familiar sound of that cornet solo, Robin Adair, that caused the heiress of Belvoir Castle to dream of happy days past and gone. Now the young lady never imagined for a moment that the musician in the Federal camp was the very man she had formerly loved. Four years had elapsed, and Lillian had found there were more musicians in the world than one. To be sure the music sounded like his music, but who was he after all? Then Miss Fairfax commenced to wonder, as she had often done before, what the initials R. A. stood for.

Miss Fairfax made quite a pretty picture as she lay there, curled up on the sofa. A little below the medium height, she was a typical blonde, with exquisitely moulded features, dreamy blue eyes, and a profusion of wavy, flaxen hair. A true Saxon beauty was my Lady, showing

all the traces of the Fairfax stock, even to the color of hair: for *fairfax* signifies fair hair. As for her dress, she wore a close-fitting habit of some dark-colored material, through which the indistinct outlines of a faultless though somewhat slender form were indistinctly revealed. Her age was about twenty years.

The drawing-room of Castle Belvoir, in which her ladyship was musing on this rainy June morning, was, of itself, a curious apartment. The wood-work and furniture were oaken, and all carved in a quaint manner; the floor was also of oak, highly polished with wax. All the timber in the house had been brought from England to Virginia, in good old colonial times. In one corner of the room stood an ancient arm rack, surmounted by a mammoth pair of stag horns. On this rack were hung, in truly artistic style, a variety of strange implements of war: cross-bows, arquebuses, flint-lock pistols, Chinese match-locks, Spanish dirks, and other weapons of antique pattern. Around the walls were suspended numerous portraits of the Fairfax family.

The faces of Lillian's proud line of ancestors looked down on the heiress, with a mute sort of dignity, adorned in their big wigs, laces and ruffles. Above the wide fireplace, hung the portrait of My Lord Culpepper, to whom His Majesty, Charles II, had, in a passing fit of generosity, given a grant for the whole of Virginia, but, afterwards, in a moment of stinginess, had taken it away again, with the exception of that immense tract of land lying 'twixt the Potomac and Rappahannock rivers, known

as the "Northern Neck" of the Dominion. To the right of this portrait, was that of My Lord's grandson and heir, Lord Thomas Fairfax, the seventh Fairfax, who inherited the title of Lord Cameron. Then came the portraits of many of the kinsmen of My Lord, one of these, in particular, painted by the celebrated artist, Gilbert Stuart, attracted attention. It was that of Lord Bryan Fairfax, a minister of the English Church, and the last of the Fairfaxes, who held a title on American soil. It was the same Bryan Fairfax, who was related, through marriage, to Mr. George Washington, of Mt. Vernon.

It is hardly needful to state, that Mr. Washington was a rebel general, who, arrayed his forces against George III, and, after vanquishing his Royal Highness, took unto himself, the proud title of first President of the Republic. It is a historical fact, that Lord Bryan Fairfax wrote many letters to his kinsman, Mr. Washington, in which he begged and entreated the gentleman from Mt. Vernon, to cease his ungodly war on the King.

These letters were answered in a kind and friendly spirit by Mr. Washington, but that they did not have the desired effect is evident to any student of American History. Had King George been successful in thrashing his rebellious subjects, I have no doubt, at this very moment, the present descendants of Lord Bryan Fairfax, would be the titled rulers of north-eastern Virginia. If a strong remnant of old family pride, still lingers among many ancient families of the Dominion can we blame them?

It becomes amusing sometimes, however, when the type of olden nobility, clad in worn-out jeans, impecunious, illiterate and dissipated, asserts its rights to some time-honored name. The young lady, who was day-dreaming in the drawing-room of Belvoir Castle, had very little family pride, although in her case, she was justly entitled to plenty of it. If her ladyship was romantic in her disposition; if she was just a little lazy and spoiled, we can not blame her. She had absolutely nothing to do, but lounge around the house and read novels, while the Federal forces occupied Greenwich Court House; for, during such periods, Aunt Janet would not allow her ward to go to town, for fear "those horrid Yankees might insult you, darling." When the Confederates occupied the place, it was a different matter. At such a time, Lillian was permitted to visit her friends, ride horse-back, and amuse herself in any way she saw proper.

When the stars and bars floated in the valley below, the young lady was wont to don her most becoming riding suit, mount her blooded bay mare, and canter down the mountain-road to town, then up through the main street of Greenwich Court House. Then it was that the Confederate officers would gaze admiringly after her, and many a gallant soldier's heart beat faster than usual under its gray jacket, feeling the first alarming, but not dangerous symptom of love. There was Captain Marion Blood, of the — South Carolina regiment, a scion of one of the first families of the Palmetto State.

He swore, "In Chawlstawn, whah, gentlemen, I assure you my social position ah fust-class, I nevah saw the equal for loveliness of that thah Miss Fawfax—I'll make her acquaintance, shuah."

He kept his word, for he induced the Rev. Braxton Lewis to take him up to the castle and introduce him. For three weeks, the captain, neglecting his Yankee foes, besieged the heart of Miss Fairfax, in the hope of capturing that vital organ, and thus make the maid his prisoner for life. He played chess with her, took long drives with her, quoted poetry to her, whispered sentiment to her, and, all the while, looked love at her from his large, dark eyes. In fact, he exerted all the well-known means employed by the masculine sex when they play for a woman's heart. In a week, it was the talk of the town that Miss Lillian was certainly engaged to Captain Blood. In the Confederate camp, numerous bets were made as to the ultimate termination of the affair. It was whispered about in Captain Blood's mess, that his symptoms were worse than usual. Never before had that dashing officer lost his appetite, dropped his pipe, stopped his Bourbon, and refused to take a hand at "old sledge."

It was for this reason that Major Harry Carter, of the — Tennessee, made the remark that, "Marion Blood ah foolin' away his time, shuah. I played the Jack keard thah myself, and wah scooped," which remark of course, reaching the ears of the chivalrous Blood, that gentleman hunted Carter up, and high words passed between the two—

"I allow no man to inquiah or meddle in my affahs, by Gawd, sah, Captain Cawtah! I demand an apology, or satisfaction, sah!" whereupon time and place of meeting was settled on.

Fortunately, the duel was stopped by General Fort, their commanding officer, who severely reprimanded the two young men—"Your lives, gentlemen, belong to your country—to the South. I shall tolerate no duelling in my command—war of itself is murderous enough, and duelling is worse than murder. I shall cashier the first officer who, hereafter, gives or accepts a challenge," and the noble old Virginian shook his gray head, in a manner that indicated his order must not be disobeyed; so the "affah of honah" terminated.

The evening afterward, Marion Blood wended his way to Belvoir Castle. He found the object of his affections seated on the piazza with her aunt.

"Would Miss Lillian object to taking a stroll down the road—it was such a beautiful star-light night?"

Miss Fairfax appealed to her aunt Janet for permission.

"No!" firmly; "it's best for Lillian to remain at home. The dew is falling, and the ground is damp."

Captain Blood "had not thought of that—of course Miss Fairfax must not run the risk of catching cold; her health was dearer to him than all the world," feelingly. "Suppose they go into the drawing-room, out of the chill night-air?" and, offering the young lady his arm, the captain escorted her into the house, leaving Aunt Janet to enjoy the chilly air she seemed to be so afraid of, on the front porch.

Aunt Janet laughed. "He thinks I'm a dragon," she muttered, "Oh! my-my! why does Lillian act so?" and the old lady closed her eyes and recalled some of the recollections of her own girlhood—"It's just the way I carried on with Rodney Tucker," she murmured. "To think of Rodney being a grandfather now, and a Confederate senator, too—just to think—I might have married him, and been the leader of fashion at Richmond—but, pshaw! I never loved him."

It is thus our grandmothers revisit, in dreams, the shades of their earlier courtships, renew the triumphs of their youth, live over ancient flirtations again, and, at sixty, are as romantic as when they were sixteen. Yonder prim old lady, in white cap and lace ruffles, from whose cheeks the furrows of time have turned out the girlish dimples, and buried the rose-tints forever, as she sits demurely gazing at the dying embers in the fire-place, is not thinking of eternity, but of John, William, or Harry, who loved her, and called her "darling," in the long, long ago. Oh! you innocent, dear old lady! and grandpa, who sits wheezing with asthma, on the other side of the hearth, wonders what Betsey is smiling at, which, not being able to discover, the old gentleman resumes his own dreaming—wishes he could induce neighbor Jones to sell him a hundred acres more off his blue-grass meadow—wonders if hemp will go up, and the corn crop be good next summer—Avaunt! ye ancient masks—who dare say we ever grow old?"

Aunt Janet sat on the porch, regardless of chilly night

air and dew. She knew that Captain Blood would not remain long, for she was a veteran in love's service. The old lady saw that the captain was about to make a last desperate effort, and about to send his forlorn hope to a final charge on the redoubts and citadels of Lillian's too well fortified heart. Shall we say it? she knew that the gallant officer would be repulsed and defeated; for Aunt Janet had all a woman's prescience regarding such matters. "The idea of a Blood expecting to marry into the Fairfax family, anyhow," muttered the old lady, and she smiled at the total absurdity of such a proposition. "Braxton Lewis is the man for her," thought Aunt Janet, who placed implicit confidence in the idea that Lillian would, in the course of time, become very fond of the rector of All-Innocents.

Captain Blood left the house five minutes later. He was in a furious passion, and his sword jangled harshly against the gravel on the path, as he dashed angrily down the lawn towards the road. He did not even stop to say good night to Madam Flournoy; but disappointed love forgets politeness sometimes. Next day he was playing "old sledge" and taking his Bourbon as usual. "I want three points, High, Low, Game," remarked Colonel Bangs. "I played the Jack kee-ard," said Blood, whereupon there was a hearty laugh all around, and Captain Carter and Marion Blood, drank a health to each other, while they both agreed to forget Miss Fairfax. Neither Carter nor Blood, figure further in our story; we only relate the incident, to show that Lillian had had several

little affairs of the heart, and that she was not a coquette. For can a charming young woman be blamed for acting so? If young men will make fools of themselves, they must take the consequences; and because a maiden is kind, polite, and agreeable, why should a man propose to her? This is a question to be answered by some abler psychologist. It is easy to see from this, why the young woman, lying on the sofa there, wanted to go to town; and, why she was disappointed that the Yankees still lingered at Greenwich Court House.

As Lillian was thinking over old times, she heard the sound of Jacques' footsteps outside. Jumping to her feet, she ran to open the door for Colonel Flournoy.

"How's my little darling this morning?" was his first greeting.

"I'm awfully vexed, Jacques," said she, kissing him. "Only think, those mean Yankees are still in town, and I can not go there with Aunt Janet, to-day;" and she stamped her little foot, impatiently.

"Can't go to town?" queried the colonel, elevating his heavy eyebrows in surprise.

"Why, I never go there when the Yankees hold the place. Aunt Janet says, they would insult me. They are such a lot of brutes."

"Insult you? Nonsense!" said the colonel. "Why, Lil, if you want to go to town, I'll take you myself. I'm astonished that mother should put such ideas into your silly little head. Yankees, dear, are much like the rest of mankind; there are many pure, good, noble gentle-

men, in the ranks of the Federal Army. The Northern officers, whom I met in Nashville, were all perfect gentlemen."

"Perfect gentlemen! Indeed?" exclaimed Lillian, in a tone of contempt. "Killing, burning, stealing, insulting the women of the South. No! I won't believe it—I hate them! I despise them! The very idea of your saying such a thing—you, a Southerner!" And her ladyship walked the floor in a perfect rage.

Jacques Flournoy sighed and pulled his long mustache, while his large brown eyes softened with an expression of pity.

"So you won't go to town, dear?" he gently said. "See, there's the sunlight at last!"

Sure enough, the storm was over. Just then Uncle Pete, the aged colored butler entered:—

"Mass' Flanoy, y'ah mudder says, y'ah breakfast dun gittin' cold."

So Lillian, taking the colonel's arm, escorted him out into the dining room, where Aunt Janet was impatiently waiting to pour out the morning coffee. After the meal was finished, Jacques started up from the table

"I'm going to town to-day, aunty," said Lillian; then seeing the look of amazement on the old lady's face, she added, "with Jacques."

Madam Flournoy gazed at her son, inquiringly:—

"Jacques Flournoy, I'm astonished at you! What! going to take that child to town? Going to expose her to the insults of those miserable Yankee mudsills? Bah! You are mad to ever think of such a thing."

"Why, Madam, you don't suppose any one would dare to insult Lillian, while she is under my protection?" A flush of anger o'erspread the colonel's cheek, as he spoke.

"Well, well! if you will have it so," said Aunt Janet, rising from her chair. "But, Jacques Flournoy, if anything happens to that child, you are alone to blame." Whereupon Madam Flournoy walked majestically out of the room.

"Pete, send the horses around to the front porch, and, old fellow, go up to my room and fetch down that revolver, lying on my bureau."

"Gwine, sah," answered the grinning darkey, and scudded out of the apartment.

Ten minutes later, Colonel Flournoy and Lillian Fairfax, were descending the mountain road, on their way to Greenwich Court House. The storm was over.

The sun was shining gloriously, throwing its cheering rays over valley, dale and hill, and on the high mountain sides, which stood out heavily wooded with forest trees, the bright green verdure of the oak, contrasted pleasantly with its darker background of brown and weather-beaten pine. A gentle breeze came blowing up from the valley below, and the fragrance of the wood violet, the wild rose, and the red clover, pervaded the atmosphere. From the underbrush, where the rain drops were still glistening like so many diamonds in the sun-light, echoed the shrill sweet notes of the cardinal red bird (the mocking songster of the Old Dominion), mimicking

its rival, the lark, which, in the meadows was carolling to its yellow-breasted mate.

All nature seemed tranquil and happy on these mountain sides. But the demon of hate, fury, murder, lurked in the hearts of God's greatest creation, Man, who, in the beautiful valley, under stars and stripes, under stars and bars, had turned scythe into sword, pruning knife into bayonet, and even moulded the ringing anvil into cannon; watching, waiting, praying for the harvest of blood. *Bella! horrida bella!*

CHAPTER II.

Father Patrick Burke has a Morning Visitor.

Every town, no matter what its population, has its distinguished citizens; and Greenwich Court House, before the war, was no exception to this general rule. There was its prominent banker, Croesus Hites; its leading lawyer, Hon. Randolph Nelson; its two eminent divines, Rev. Braxton Lewis and Father Patrick Burke; its celebrated physician, Dr. Harris Balmaine; and last, but not least, its editor, Colonel Caxton Blow, of the *Bugle*.

It is in the eternal fitness of things that the rank and file of society, obeying a natural law, recognize, as if by instinct, the highest cultured members of a community, and assign to them the leadership in all things political

and social; rating each fortunate individual with unerring accuracy, and seldom—very seldom—making a mistake. These leaders are looked up to and respected by the dear public, and are, likewise, cordially hated by their less successful rivals in business. It is this love of leadership, in-born in many a man, that induces him to enter the game of life, and compete for the first positions of honor. So, we have our ladder-climbers on the saw-dust arena of fame; men who don the tights, spangles, and bells, and appear, like so many performers, before their fellow-citizens, hoping to gain applause. With what a feeling of satisfaction your high-climber looks down on the gaping multitude; again, how he trembles and is made miserable by the idea that some rival, close at his heels, may out-climb or trip him up; how he struggles and renews his climbing toward the dizzy top, thinking, often vainly thinking, not to be out-distanced, but to keep ahead; for, the last round reached, he knows that the recompense of lasting local fame is certain and yearns for that coveted reward—a first-class society position.

In the meantime, the noble rabble of spectators are content to look on at the performance. How they clap their hands and applaud the actors; how they hoot, jeer and are pleased when the gymnast, almost at the top, tumbles to earth again; how they encourage the climber just starting, who slips and slides on the greasy and well-worn lower round. "Go it, young fellow! climb! climb!" shout the delighted audience. Happy that man, perched securely on top, the successful man. With what

complacency he wipes his perspiring forehead after his laborious work, and looks down, from among the clouds, on the admiring, but now envious populace.

"All the world's a stage," wrote the great English bard, and how much truth he has written. Greenwich Court House had had its climbers, and we have just mentioned the names of some of these prominent gentlemen.

At the outbreak of the war the leaders of society in the little town were somewhat divided in political opinion. Hon. Randolph Nelson, (ex-congressman and ex-state senator), a man dearly loved and respected up to that time by the people, had taken strong grounds against "secession," and made numerous speeches, urging his neighbors to cling to the old flag; begging them to spurn the demon of treason, and stand by that union for which their forefathers had fought and bled; conjuring them, by the memories of Washington and Jefferson, to keep and hold sacred the noble inheritance bequeathed them.

For several months this distinguished old gentleman, by his personal influence and glowing eloquence, had persuaded the people of Greenwich Court House to keep quiet. The authorities at Richmond, aware of Nelson's influence, offered him a high position in the new Confederation of States. This offer he rejected with contempt. Cræsus Hites, Colonel Blow and Rev. Braxton Lewis, however, formed a strong combination against Nelson, and only awaited a favorable opportunity to wrest his power from him, and drag his proud, but now hated name, down to the dust.

The opportunity soon arrived, for, on June 1st, 1861, Lieutenant Tompkins, with Company B, 2nd United States Cavalry, had a fight with some Virginia militia, at Fairfax Court House (in an adjoining county). The news of this engagement, was carried by couriers to Greenwich Court House; thereupon, there was intense excitement. the town-hall and church bells were tolled, and an extra edition of the *Bugle* was issued, urging the people of Virginia to arm, and drive the hated foe from her borders.

That night there was a mass-meeting of citizens called, and the town-hall was crowded to its utmost capacity. Colonel Blow started the ball in motion, by offering a series of resolutions, regarding the sovereign rights of States, after which he denounced the "Abolition Government," at Washington City. He indulged in a fiery speech:—

"The murderous hordes of Yankee thieves and vandals, have invaded the very precincts of your fire-sides, Oh, Virginians! Your neighbors and fellow citizens, have been shot down in cold blood, at their own door-steps. The innocent babe has been torn from its mother's arms, and its brains dashed out against the walls of Fairfax Court House. Virginia women (Great God! gentlemen, that such things can be), have been insulted, kicked, cursed, spit upon by these hell-hounds, these Northern hirelings. The blood of your mothers and of your sisters calls upon you for vengeance—Virginians, arise! and crush out these Yankee minions

from the sacred soil of the State. To arms! To arms!" etc., etc.

The Rev. Braxton Lewis followed Colonel Blow in an equally excited speech; after which, Crœsus Hites, the banker, came forward on the platform. He announced that he was ready to furnish the money to arm and equip five hundred men, and called for volunteers. Numbers of young fellows rushed forward to sign their names to the muster-roll.

During all this scene of wild excitement, a tall old man, on whose head the snows of some seventy winters had fallen, was trying to push his way through the crowd, in order to reach the platform. Scarcely had Crœsus Hites made his offer, and, while the angry mass of people were surging forward to enroll their names, than the old man, finally managed to reach the stage. Striding to the speakers' desk, he roughly pushed the banker to one side:—

"Gentlemen!" and the clarion voice of the speaker rang out clear, and distinct, above all that awful tumult: "Gentlemen of Virginia!" and the tall form loomed upward over the crowd, and stood there with waving white locks and flashing eyes: "Fellow-citizens!" and the old man's body inclined in a stately bow: "I beg you, I implore you, for the sake of the mothers, wives, and children of Virginia, that you listen to me, if only for a moment." A perfect stillness had fallen on the multitude, and, at this instant, one might have heard a pin drop.

"The news from Fairfax Court House, to-day, is not so bad as represented. There has been trouble there, I will admit. Trouble, entirely brought about, by a gang of black-hearted scoundrels, who, under pretense of being friends of dear old Virginia, have stirred up treason and sedition against the noblest government God ever created. A man, was indeed, shot at Fairfax Court House to-day. How, and why?" Here an angry murmur, like the distant rumblings of thunder, was heard through the hall. "He fired on the flag of his country! He was a traitor to the Union, and there is but one punishment for a traitor—death! I thank God for the bullet that sent his soul to the perdition it so justly deserved. Would it had been that man sitting over in the corner there." Here the speaker pointed his long forefinger at Colonel Blow. "Would it had been that cringing, lying hypocrite."

Colonel Blow sprang to his feet and rushed toward the speaker.

"You call me a liar," he yelled. "You hoary-headed old traitor! You d—!" And the loud crack of a Deringer echoed through the hall, followed an instant later by the detonating bang of a Colt's revolver; at the same instant, two men fell on the floor; one of these men was the venerable speaker; the other, was the editor of the *Bugle*.

Randolph Nelson had been shot in the side; Colonel Blow lay weltering in his own gore with his lower jaw shattered and torn. Maddened by the sight of blood

and the smell of gunpowder, the crowd raged like wild beasts. In the meantime, the wounded men were carried off by friends, through a back entrance. Then occurred a scene of disorder and confusion which defies description. Order was partially restored, thanks to the strenuous efforts of Rev. Braxton Lewis, after which the rector of All-Innocents, delivered an excited harangue, working up the passions of the mob to its highest possible pitch again.

"If there has been murder at Fairfax Court House, to-day, there has, likewise, been murder at Greenwich Court House. You have just seen, with your own eyes, one of the noblest, and most patriotic sons of Virginia, shot down before you in cold blood. I allude to Colonel Blow. There are traitors here in our very midst. Traitors to Virginia; traitors to the South. Such are Randolph Nelson and Harris Balmaine. You all saw Balmaine shoot Blow down like a dog. Poor, generous, manly Blow, who now is dying, surrounded by his heart-broken, weeping family."

Here the crowd yelled: "Hang them! hang them! Give us Balmaine, where is he? Hang him! hang him!" And the infuriated mass of humanity surged backward and forward, cursing, howling, groaning and hissing. "He's at Father Burke's house, dressing Nelson's wound," shouted a voice from the mob. "Hang the scoundrel! hang him! hang him! To Burke's! to Burke's!" And, like a blood-thirsty pack of wolves, the multitude rushed out of the hall into the open night air. All-Saints church, of which Father

Burke was pastor, fronted the public square, opposite the town-hall. The residence of the priest was a neat two-story stone house adjoining the church. Across the wide square the mob hurried, led on by the tall form of Rev. Braxton Lewis, who was loudest and most violent in his bitter denunciations of Nelson and Balmaine.

Randolph Nelson had been carried over to Father Burke's house by order of Dr. Balmaine. It was found that the ball had penetrated the old man's side, its force having been partially spent by striking and fracturing a rib. After extracting the ball, Balmaine was engaged in dressing the external wound, in which occupation he was being kindly assisted by Father Burke, and Nora Donnelly, the priest's aged housekeeper. While thus engaged, the shouts of the mob coming toward the house, were first heard. Nearer, nearer; louder and louder they came.

"The hounds are after my blood now, Burke," said the doctor. Keep them out of the house until I finish dressing this wound, then I'll take my chances with them."

"But, Dochter," said the priest, "I won't be able to keep them out. There, there they go! Sure they are trying to break down my front door!"

"Go face them, Burke," said Balmaine, sharply; "a good many of those men out thah are your Irish countrymen—membahs of your church, sah. They won't allow thah priest to be harmed."

"Faith I think you are right, Dochter. Give me the

lamp, Nora," and, followed by his faithful housekeeper, the priest left the room, locking the door behind him; leaving Balmaine alone with his moaning patient in the darkness.

"And the fox laughed, and said, 'catch me if you can,'" muttered Balmaine to himself, chuckling, while his lip curled with a smile of contempt, as he heard the cries of the angry men outside.

When Nelson had fallen to the floor that night, it was Balmaine who had shot down the assassin, Blow. The doctor had watched with a keen eye the entire proceedings of the evening's meeting. He had seen his brave, but rash, old friend pushing his way forward through the crowd, and, knowing that trouble would surely follow, had resolved to save Nelson's life at the risk of losing his own. "How can I do it?" was the question suggested to the doctor's mind. Balmaine glanced around the crowd; not a dozen men there could be relied upon. Suddenly, the problem was solved. Many of the mob were Catholics and Irishmen. "There is only one place of refuge for Nelson, to-night," thought the doctor, "and that place is Father Burke's. They won't dare to mob the priest's house, or, if they do, the crowd will fight among themselves." Just as Balmaine had reasoned to this point, he was startled by the voice of Nelson, who had commenced the address, before spoken of. The doctor's eye was in the meantime attracted toward the person of Colonel Blow. The colonel seemed to be very uneasy, and there was a malignant look of hatred

expressed on his face as he looked towards the speaker. "Blow means mischief; I'll watch him," thought the doctor. So, when Colonel Blow fired on Nelson, he received a return shot from an unlooked-for quarter. Balmaine, supposing that Nelson had been killed, had taken a cool and deliberate aim at the assassin's head, but, being jostled by the crowd, missed putting a bullet through Blow's brains, as he fully expected to do. Yes, Balmaine had missed his aim for the first time in many years. Balmaine, the best physician, the best poker-player, the best horseman, the best shot, in all Clark county. That Balmaine's course, in taking the wounded Nelson to Father Burke's house, was the true one, the sequel showed.

When the mob reached the Priest's house, they halted for a moment; then the Rector of "All Innocents" commenced kicking at the front door, at the same time clanging the knocker against the stout oaken panel until the square echoed and re-echoed with the noise. Scarcely a moment passed before the heavy door swung back on its hinges, and Father Burke confronted the mob. Back of her beloved master, stood Nora Donnelly holding a lamp, the rays of which seemed to throw a halo of glory around about the aged priest's head.

Father Burke was a man some seventy years of age. His head, which was bald, was covered by a tight-fitting black silk skull-cap. He was a well-preserved little man, with a smooth, round face of unmistakable Hibernian cast, a sweet, womanish mouth and a pair of light-blue

eyes that seemed to be always twinkling with merriment. His figure was short and stout, encased in a close-fitting habit, fastened at the waist by a broad belt; from this belt was suspended a long rosary of large jet beads, to which was fastened a small silver crucifix, and a minute ivory death's-head.

Father Burke stood calmly facing the mob, in front of which, was his old-time enemy and persecutor, the rector of All-Innocents.

"To whom am I indebted for the honor of this visit?" asked the priest, looking first at the crowd and then at the rector.

Braxton Lewis was taken aback at the coolness of the man. This was the first time they had spoken since the episode of the slave-girl, Epsy, an incident mentioned in the preceding chapter. At last, the rector, summoning up courage, hissed out, in an angry voice—

"You are secreting in your house a murderer, an assassin, a scoundrel!"

"Who is he?" inquired the imperturbable priest, his blue eyes lighting up with a well-feigned air of astonishment.

"Who is he?" sneered Lewis, "a pretty question for you to ask—you know well enough to whom I refer. You know it's that black-hearted Balmaine, who shot Colonel Blow—no fooling, now! Bring out the villain—quick! or we'll level the house over your lying old head."

The priest was undaunted by the threat. "Blow, shot by Balmaine—sure you are joking now—and killed too?"

Ah! the docther was always a fine marksman. It's many a nice mess of birds he's brought me—on Fridays, too," he added, smiling with good humor.

"Balmaine! Balmaine! Let us have the scoundrel," yelled the impatient rabble outside.

"I'll parley with you no longer," shouted the rector, unable to contain himself for fury. "Enough of your nonsense, you miserable old Jesuit—come! come now! keep out of the way—we must and will go in and find him," and suiting his actions to his words, the rector rudely seized the priest by the shoulder, and attempted to push him aside. The priest resisted, but he was no match for the rector. There was a scuffle, and Father Burke was thrown to the floor. It was then that Nora Donnelly rushed to the rescue of her beloved master.

"Oh! wirra! wirra! would yez kill the praste entirely? Howly Mother! Git out, yez bloody Protestants! yez murthurin' Orangemen!" she howled, and, at this critical moment, hurled the large lamp she held, full at the head of the rector. Down went Rev. Braxton Lewis, and the lamp was broken into a thousand pieces against the door-sill. All was now in darkness. "He's murthurin' the praste! Down wid him! Down wid him!" and a strong chorus of voices took up Nora's cry, while a score of stalwart Irish railroad hands rushed to the rescue of their threatened pastor.

Braxton Lewis, stunned by the blow, was hustled off into the crowd, which now hissed, hooted and cheered. There would have been a bloody riot in a few moments

more, but, at this juncture, the second-story window of the priest's house was thrown open, and Father Burke again appeared, with the faithful Nora standing behind him, she holding a lighted candle in each hand.

"My children," said the priest, and a profound silence fell on the multitude, "May God forgive you, as I do, for this night's work. You have committed a great crime. What have I ever done, that I should be treated so rudely and unkindly? For fifty years I have been a law-abiding citizen of Greenwich Court House, and I defy any man among you, to say that I have ever harmed him by word, look or action. I have tried to do right as a man and as a priest of God's Holy Church. Your joys have ever been my joys, your sorrows I have ever shared. I have always tried to do my duty, and my action, to-night, though it may have given offense, is only prompted by this same sense of duty. In a moment of anger you would have shed the life-blood of one of your best friends. A man, who, for the last thirty years, has devoted his time and services to your good health and welfare. A man who, in times of pestilence and trouble, has stood by you, doctoring and ministering to the sick at the risk of his own life. Why, he has saved my life twice, when I had been given up to die of the fever. A man who has faced the rain, hail, snow, and the burning rays of the summer sun for, lo, these many years, and has snatched your mothers, wives, sisters, children from the jaws of death and brought them back to life and the blessed happiness of health again. Sure, I'd be ungrate-

ful if I had not sheltered the man who has done so much for all of you. Still you blame me, knock me down at my own doorstep, and break the finest lamp I ever owned."

Here the priest's eyes sparkled with humor again, while the crowd laughed. "Besides, the docther's not ready to die yet—sure he always disliked hanging, and would prefer to be shot—besides, he's not prepared for death. You all know he's not a believer in the Holy Trinity, and has not been inside of a church for many a year, and you want to kill him before he's been baptized. Ah! gentlemen that would be a fearful sin. Now, if you must hang some one, I propose to take Balmaine's place; I'm an old man, and a few years, more or less, will make no difference to me. Shall I come down?" The old man looked over the sea of heads and upturned faces, as he asked the question. A mighty shout of "No! No!" rose from the crowd outside. I'll take you at your word, gentlemen. I know now that you will leave me and my guest in peace. Good night." Down went the window, and the lights disappeared. Shortly afterwards the crowd dispersed. There had been a revulsion of feeling in favor of Nelson and Balmaine, and these two gentlemen felt that they owed their lives to Father Burke. Colonel Blow and Nelson did not die of their wounds, although the injuries received by the latter no doubt hastened his subsequent death. So passed the first angry months of the "Great Rebellion."

Nelson moved out to his country-seat, some five miles

from town. Blow suspended the issue of the *Bugle*, and spent most of his time between Richmond and Greenwich Court House. He was strongly suspected by the Federal authorities of being a spy, and was several times arrested and imprisoned. He became the bosom friend of Rev. Braxton Lewis and Croesus Hites. These two did not enter the Confederate service; in fact, Hites and Blow were too old; for the rector, however, there was no excuse.

Braxton Lewis claimed exemption on the ground of his sacred calling. "I can be of more service to the South by remaining at home," he was wont to remark, and he told the truth in this instance, for he was one of the most successful of spies during the earlier years of the war. The rector had other reasons for remaining at home; he was playing a game that no one but himself and his two friends were aware of. Several years prior to this time he had made up his mind to marry the heiress to the Fairfax estate. Hence, his unwillingness to leave the town and enter the Southern army, as most of his fellow-citizens had done.

Hites and Blow were not anxious to have Lewis leave; this for a most excellent reason. Lewis owed both of these gentlemen large sums of borrowed money; he had anticipated the fortune he expected to marry, and had mortgaged himself to the banker and the editor. "If Lewis should happen to be fool enough to go into the army and be killed, I'd be out ten thousand dollars," said Colonel Blow. "And I about twenty-eight thousand" added Croesus Hites.

It will be seen from this, what ties bound these three men together; for the rest, they secretly hated and mistrusted each other.

Dr. Balmaine was entirely wrapped up in his profession. He avoided talking politics altogether, and attended to his medical duties. He was known to be a Union man, but he said naught against Virginia, nor against his many friends who entered the Confederate service.

Father Burke was an outspoken Union man, but such was the esteem in which he was held by the members of his congregation, many of whom espoused the Southern cause, that he was left unmolested ever after. The feud between Balmaine and Colonel Blow still existed, for the latter swore an oath, that he would kill the doctor the first opportunity that offered. Balmaine, in the meantime, kept his eye on the colonel, and the townspeople expected to see a lively fight every time the pair approached each other on the street; but months passed, and Balmaine and Blow walked about town without shooting at each other, much to the disgust of their mutual friends.

Had the colonel been certain of killing his man at the first fire, he would have opened hostilities, but he knew that the doctor was a dead shot, and, accordingly, shunned a fair fight; his chivalrous soul was, therefore, for the present, content with scowling at the passing form of the watchful and ever alert Balmaine. This was the condition of affairs at Greenwich Court House at the time our story opens, and on the morning that Colonel Flournoy and his cousin Lillian started for town.

On this same bright June morning, a gentleman was leisurely cantering his horse across the public square, toward Father Burke's residence. The rider, who was mounted on a superb, blooded mare, was a thin-visaged man, some fifty years of age. His hair and whiskers, which he wore long, were of a light sandy color, with streakings of gray, scattered here and there. He had a long and prominent hooked-nose, high cheek-bones, and a pair of dreamy brown eyes. He was attired in a suit of blue jeans; his wide trowsers, tucked away in an enormous pair of cow-hide riding-boots which came up to his knees. On his head was a broad-brimmed sombrero.

This rough-looking individual rode straight up to the curbstone, in front of the priest's house, and there, dismounting and leaving his horse unhitched, he opened the door of the parsonage without even as much as rapping, and walked in.

Going upstairs, two steps at a time, he crossed the narrow hall-way at the top platform, and again, without ceremony, turned the knob of a door, and entered the priest's study. Looking around and seeing no person within, the man threw his hat on the table, and drawing a chair up to the side-window, looked down into the garden below.

"Hallo, thah, Burke! Good mawning to you!"

The party so familiarly addressed, who was gathering a bouquet of June roses, looked up in an amused sort of way, and said:—

"And is it you, Dochter?"

"It's I, sah," responded Balmaine, for it was that worthy physician, who was making himself so much at home.

"You will find a pipe on the table, Docther, and if you feel dhry, there's a dhrop of something in the corner cupboard. I'll be up just as soon as I put these flowers on the althar," and the priest vanished through a side entrance of All-Saints church.

Balmaine arose from his chair, filled a pipe and lit it, then taking a book from the table, again resumed his seat at the window. Tilting his chair backward, the doctor looked up into the blue sky. The birds sang in the garden below, the soft zephyrs of June fanned his sun-burned cheek and brought the incense-offering of the rose to him. The tobacco-smoke curled upwards, and he was dreamful and happy. This man loved the world for the joy it gave him. When he rode through the green fields or the shadowy forest, under starlight, moonlight, or the bright warm sunlight of the noon-day, he breathed the pure, open air of heaven, and felt thankful that he lived. He could imitate the whistle of all the different varieties of birds which abounded in that section of country. These birds would chaff him and chatter at him from the hedges, bushes, and trees on the roadside, for they all seemed to know him. He, on his part, held converse with them in their own language, at least he imagined that they understood him, and would smile and talk to them as though they were human.

He loved nature, because of its innocence. He had no particular religious belief. Churches and creeds might pass away, and he know nothing and care less about them. He believed in heaven, because though happy, he wished to be happier still. He did not believe in hell, because he thought the Great Being who created the universe was too kind and generous, to damn that which he had created. He saw the good in mankind, and loved it, because it was good. He saw the evil in mankind, and hated it, because it was evil. His was not a speculative philosophy. When younger, he had been a swimmer on the ocean of theory, buffeting the surf of unsettled opinions, until carried by the waves far seawards, he had tried in vain to touch bottom and found it was beyond his depth; it was then he returned closer to shore, where the *terra firma* of fact under his feet, gave him the calm feeling of self-security. He gave quinine in intermittent fever, because it broke up the chills; why it broke up the chills, he knew not, or cared not. "To the d—l with your theories", he was wont to say, and, in this case, he believed his satanic majesty to be as much of a humbug as the aforesaid theories. It will be seen from this, that Balmaine was a heathen, born, bred and raised in "Virginia, Sah."

The doctor smoked his briar-wood pipe, and, after a few moments puffing, opened the book he held in his hand. By chance, his eye fell on the following passage: "If thou hadst a good conscience, thou wouldst not much fear death. If thou hast, at any time, seen a man die, think that thou must also pass the same way."

"Many die, suddenly, when they little think of it. For—" Here the door was pushed ajar, and Father Burke entered. Looking at the book, the doctor was reading, he exclaimed, "Faith it's my Thomas A. Kempis your reading, Dochter!" "Your Thomas, what?" said Balmaine, quickly closing the book, and looking at the title on the back. "Well! I declah to goodness, I thought it was the Bible."

The priest smiled: "Ah! Dochter," said he, "It's almost as good a book."

"Burke," the irreverent Balmaine never called the priest by any other name, "I've come to the conclusion that I have a mighty good conscience."

"What makes you think so?" inquired Father Burke, his jolly round face wreathed in good humor.

"Why, I don't fear death, and, according to your Thomas A—what-do-you-call-him, a person who don't fear death must have a good conscience. Do you know, I was shot at again last night? Look heah!" and Balmaine, going to the table, lifted up his hat and pointed to the bullet-hole through the crown. The priest rolled his eyes up, an expression of anxiety showing itself on his face.

"That's the second time within a month. Sure as the old saying is, 'the third time's the charm.' Dochter, don't go out of town again after night," imploringly.

"I shall go, sah, whenever I'm called. But, Burke, look heah; if I'm found dead on the road some mawning, with a bullet-hole through my head or heart, I want you

to go to Majah Atkins, the Yankee commandant, and tell him that the man who killed Harris Balmaine was—"

"Who? Who?" eagerly asked the excited priest.

"My particular friend, Colonel Blow," said the doctor, quietly lighting a fresh pipe as he spoke.

"Sure, now, you don't mean it," said Father Burke, in a tone of surprise.

"Well, I do mean it. Look heah!" quoth the doctor, pulling out a piece of rumpled and mud-stained paper, which, holding up, he read as follows:

"GREENWICH COURT HOUSE, June, 1863.

"DEAR COLONEL:—B—— goes up to Nelson's house to-night, as the old man is worse again. Take the high point on the ridge, as the cover is thick there, and, if you follow the footpath back to Hites' farm, you will be all safe. The ford at North Fork would be a good place, if it were not for those infernal Yankee pickets, who might hear the shot.

All goes well at the castle. I have completely hoodwinked the old lady by my pious talk, and what an old fool she is, to be sure. Jacques is back, less one arm. What a pity his head was not shot off, as I am afraid he will interfere with our plans; he never liked me, anyhow. If I capture the heiress, I will pay you back every cent I owe you, with interest, too. In addition, you shall have that four hundred acres of bottom land. Call and see me before you send those letters to Richmond. I hope you will give Major Atkins the same dose you propose to give

B—. I shall try and hurry up matters with Lady Lillian. She is cold, but she must and shall come to terms."

"Yours,

"BRAXEY."

"P. S.—Miss Fairfax has promised to copy the dispatches for me."

While the doctor was reading this letter, the eyes of Father Burke opened wider and wider.

"Sure you have caught two fine birds this time, Docther," he remarked, gleefully.

"Yes, sah; I have that—To think of the scoundrel even daring to think of making Lillian Fairfax his wife! To hear of the cool way in which they propose to murder me! Well, I'll look out for the villain," said Balmaine, and his brow contracted in an ominous, frowning way: "I've got a good notion to walk down town, hunt up Blow, and pull triggah on him at sight."

"You shall do nothing of the kind," said the priest. "Give me the letter, and I will take it to Major Atkins, and have both the rascals handed over to military justice—you want no blood on your hands, Docther, and you shall not turn assassin. By the way, how did you come into possession of that letter?"

"Well, you see," said Balmaine; "last night, I had to go up to Nelson's; I was returning about eleven o'clock, and when I reached the ford, I found North Fork was a perfect rivah. Howevah, I managed to swim the mare across, and, just as we wah ascending the bank on this side, I heard the loud report of a rifle. The mare was so

startled by the noise and the bright flash, that she took fright, and galloped a quatah of a mile befoah I could check her up. I rode straight home, changed my wet clothes, and went to bed. Early this mawning, I rode out to North Fork again, hoping to be able to find the tracks of the party who fired the shot, but the rain had washed away and obliterated any foot-marks that might have been made in the mud. In searching through the bushes, howevah, I saw something white lying on the ground. Stooping ovah, I picked up this lettah. Now, it is certain to my mind, sah, that Blow must have dropped it from his pocket, and, in the darkness of the night, did not notice it."

"But are you absolutely certain that the letter belongs to Colonel Blow?" asked Father Burke.

"Look heah," said Balmaine, in response, turning over the other side of the sheet. Sure enough, there were the following directions :

"COLONEL CAXTON BLOW,

"12 Main Street,

"Greenwich Court House, Va."

"Phew!" whistled the priest "that settles the matter. Well, Dochter, you may thank God that you have come so safely out from this affair. Sure I think it's my prayers that saved you. It's myself that remembers you at the althar, any time I go there, you benighted heathen. I'll have to bury you yet, Dochter, and have a solemn high mass over you; though," added Father Burke, smilingly, "I hope there will be no occasion, for such service for fifty years to come."

"Don't blarney me, Burke," interrupted the doctor, laughingly; "I nevah was bawn to be shot."

"See here Dochter, would you mind giving me that letter?" inquired the priest.

"Most decidedly," answered Balmaine, "I wish you to keep the subject-mattah of this lettah a secret. I propose to take a copy of it to the provost marshal, Majah Atkins, only omitting a certain portion relating to Miss Fairfax."

"What portion?" asked Father Burke, and the doctor read aloud as follows:

"Miss Fairfax has promised to copy the dispatches for me." "You see, Burke, if this was shown, Miss Lillian would be placed under suspicion as being a spy, and she might be arrested too. Now I don't believe that the young lady would be guilty of playing such a part. Why, if she were found guilty of such a charge, all the Fairfax estate would be confiscated. Don't you see?"

The priest nodded assent, and said: "So you only propose to give Major Atkins part of the letter?"

"Yes;" replied Balmaine; "but I also propose to do still moah, I shall not only give him the lettah, but I shall also interest him in the heiress. When Atkins reads of the plot against this young woman, he will fall in love with her himself—don't you see? He's a bachelor, and a trifle romantic, I should judge. Yes; Braxton Lewis shall have a rival in the Yankee commandant, and, if the rector can outwit Majah Atkins, he is a smartah man than I take him for."

"I'll bet you four to one—hold up! I beg your pawdon;

I forgot you wah not a betting man. But I'm certain the Yankee majah will fall in love with her." And the doctor rubbed his hands together, greatly pleased with his new idea. He was thinking of the girl altogether, and forgetting himself.

The priest finally gave him a gentle reminder. "What of Blow?" asked Father Burke.

"Never mind him, I'll take care of Colonel Blow," answered Balmaine. The priest was amused at the doctor's original plan of protecting Miss Fairfax, but he was uneasy yet on Balmaine's account.

"In the mean time, I suppose they are at liberty to shoot you, Dochter;" he said, with just a tinge of sarcasm in his voice.

"That remains to be seen, Burke. By the way, will you let me have some paper and ink?" These articles having been brought to him, Balmaine proceeded to copy which, having done, he placed the copy in his pocket, and handed the original letter to Father Burke, remarking :

"See here, Burke, you may be right and I may be wrong. It is barely possible that I shall be killed; if so, I have a last favah to ask of you. In case of my death, the original of this lettah is to be placed in the hands of Miss Ivy Nelson; she will understand why, at once." Miss Ivy Nelson was the only living relative of Hon. Randolph Nelson; she was a young woman aged about twenty-eight years, and his only child.

"Why, what does Miss Nelson know about the affair?" asked the priest.

"Ah! that's my secret; I can't tell you at present," answered the doctor. "I have your word," he continued, "that you will be silent regarding the contents of that lettah, and that you will do as I have requested you to do?"

"On my word of honor, as a priest, you have my word for it," answered Father Burke.

"Good-by then," said Balmaine, extending his hand; then turning, he abruptly left the room. "Sure he's a square man," muttered the priest. "For the life of me, I don't see what he's up to. Ah! well, I can't keep him from acting as he will," despairingly; and Father Burke went down stairs, and out into the garden to gather more flowers, with which to adorn the altar of Our Blessed Lady; while Balmaine, rode off to call on the provost marshal of Greenwich Court House.

CHAPTER III.

In which, Major Bob Atkins meets some Old Acquaintances.

Major Atkins, provost marshal of Greenwich Court House, was sitting in his private office, writing a letter. Time had dealt kindly with Bob. He looked as young and handsome as when a student at Columbia College. If any of the young ladies who had formerly been pupils

at Madame Bonbon's charming educational institution, could have seen him, I am sure they would have at once recognized in this young warrior the former musician of Thirtieth Street.

The few hard lines, drawn here and there, across his face, had, in a measure, destroyed his boyish appearance. His expression, however, was the same open, frank, honest, winsome one, that it had been in days of yore. After leaving college, Bob started for his home in the West, with the full intention of becoming a mining engineer, but, shortly after his arrival at Toledo, his father, Bob's sole surviving relative, died, leaving the young gentleman alone in the world. The little property left Atkins, on his father's demise, consisted of a farmhouse and some twenty acres of vineyard land, located on one of the islands of Lake Erie, near the shores of northwestern Ohio. So, in place of becoming an engineer, the young man turned his entire attention to the cultivation of the grape. He was moderately successful, and was thinking of enlarging his business, when, in 1861, the first dread boom of the cannon echoed across Charleston Harbor, and Bob, like so many other young patriots of the North, rushed to the defense of the Union. Organizing a company, he entered the Federal service, with the —th Ohio Cavalry.

He was actively engaged in the earlier struggles of the war, along the Ohio borders, in Kentucky and Tennessee, and soon became known to the military authorities at Washington, as being an officer of rare executive ability.

Brave, daring and dashing in the field, he combined with these soldierly qualities, a remarkable aptitude for holding and filling semi-civilian positions. It was for these reasons, that he was detached with a part of his regiment, to perform garrison duty in the advanced line of the Federal army. Promoted in regular order to the position of major, after the battle of Franklin, Tennessee, he was transferred, with his command, from the department of the West, to the army of the Potomac, and was acting as provost marshal of Greenwich Court House, at the time our story opens.

Major Atkins was well-known to the inhabitants of the various towns in which he had been stationed, as a vigilant and watchful officer, who was not to be caught napping. Treachery might seem to be lurking at his very doorsteps, and on the very eve of destroying him, when, suddenly, the tables would be turned, and those who sought to entrap the major, would be themselves entrapped.

Time and time again, at various points, efforts had been made to capture his command. He had been known to linger in a town long after the main body of the army had fallen back, and to act in a most provokingly indifferent and careless manner; while the Confederates, certain that they had him at last within their clutches, would make a dash for him, when, lo, he escaped from them when escape seemed impossible.

This he was able to do, for the reason that his command was superbly mounted on fleet horses, and that the

commandant had a thorough knowledge of the topography of the country about the points where he happened to be stationed. Major Atkins was the terror of all the Confederate spies who abounded in Southern towns at that time, for the reason that he never arrested a man on mere suspicion. To be arrested by Major Atkins, meant sure conviction, on account of the positive evidence that gentleman always produced. How, and from whom, the major obtained his valuable information, was a matter that sorely puzzled the Confederate authorities at Richmond, who knew the man by reputation and dreaded him accordingly. Notwithstanding the awe, which he inspired among the inhabitants of towns in which he happened to be stationed, the major was respected, and even liked by many people.

He was kind, courteous, patient and just, and his presence was a sure guarantee that peace and order would prevail. Major Bob still kept up his musical performances, and it was the mellowing influence of his flute and cornet that caused many a Southern Eurydice to sigh, when this Yankee Orpheus left town. The negroes, who congregated in Federal camps in those "War times," would wend their way to headquarters every eventide, in order to enjoy the major's music. For the rest, Bob's soldiers fairly idolized their young commander, and were as docile in his hands as so many children. It will be seen, from this, that time had served to bring out the many manly qualities inherent in the former conqueror of Madame Bonbon's school. The young man sitting there on that June morning was, indeed, a rising officer.

Major Bob Atkins rang a bell lying on a table before him, and an orderly appeared in answer to his summons. "Henderson," said the major, "carry this note to Winchester, and hand it to the general." The commission read as follows:

"HEADQUARTERS, GREENWICH COURT HOUSE.

GENERAL:—In reply to your order of the 28th, requesting the arrest of Colonel Caxton Blow, I will state that his body is now at your disposal. It was my intention to have arrested him last night, and, for this purpose I detailed a squad of cavalry. Learning that Blow had suddenly left town, my men got on his track and followed him. It seems his purpose in leaving was to assassinate an old-time enemy, a certain Dr. Balmaine, who is a prominent unionist residing at this place. My men came upon him just after he had fired upon the doctor. He was surrounded, but he made his escape. Afterward, he was tracked by two of my men to the farm of Croesus Hites, a notorious rebel of this place. Here Blow was ordered to halt, and, refusing to obey, was fired upon and killed. To-day, I received a note from Hites, in which he states in the most positive manner that Balmaine assassinated Colonel Blow, and offers to produce witnesses who will swear to his statement. This story is circulating freely in town this morning. Of course Balmaine is perfectly innocent, and Hites is unaware that Colonel Blow was really killed by my men. I have ordered the two soldiers to keep perfectly quiet on the subject. In the meantime, I propose to arrest Balmaine,

in order to trap the witnesses, who will testify that they saw the doctor do the shooting. This is my present intention, although something may happen to prevent my carrying out the proposed programme. I am closely watching this Hites, who is a regular old fox. I am also watching a certain clergyman, Rev. Braxton Lewis, who, I think, is a rebel spy. The information conveyed in your dispatch to me two days since, is perfectly reliable, and I shall act on your suggestion. I remain, General,

“Your most obedient servant,

“ROBERT ATKINS,

“Major commanding, Greenwich Court House.”

As Atkins handed this letter to his orderly, Henderson, he noticed that the man lingered, as though wishing to speak to him.

“What is it you want, Henderson?” asked the major.

“I were goin’ to say suthin’ regardin’ the big Johnny Reb you knocked over at Bradyville,” answered the orderly. “You remember, I reckon, that officer you killed out there?” Atkins nodded his head in assent.

“Well,” continued the orderly, “I seed that self-same cuss a ridin’ down town not five minutes ago with one of the derndest prettiest females you ever seed.”

The major turned around, and looking sharply at the man, said: “See here, Henderson! Look me straight in the eye! Now, sir, I want you to distinctly understand that never again, so long as you live, are you to allude, in my presence, to that unfortunate gentleman who fell at Bradyville. It’s not an agreeable thing to be

reminded that you have killed a fellow-man, even on the battlefield, in fair fight. Go now! Carry that letter to Winchester as quickly as possible," and Atkins motioned his hand toward the door. "Poor fellow, he died like a soldier. God rest his soul!" muttered the major to himself as the disconcerted orderly walked out of the room.

Bob Atkins was silent for a moment or two afterward, then he put his hand in his pocket and pulled out something that glittered. It was a locket, containing the portrait of a lady. It was a souvenir of the battlefield of Bradyville, that Atkins had picked up after the fight. The major looked at this picture in a very loving and tender way.

"Oh! I wish I knew who you were," he murmured, "I wonder whether you are a Northern woman or a Southern woman—whether widow or wife?—perhaps, a maiden."

At the last thought, he felt a momentary thrill of happiness steal over him—strange to say, the former practical, and unromantic Bob Atkins had lost his heart to a painted piece of ivory. He loved the portrait for the sake of its original, whoever that might be. Now, the picture was that of Miss Lillian Fairfax, and had been lost by Colonel Flournoy, on the memorable day of the battle.

If Major Bob Atkins had only paid more attention to the looks of Madame Bonbon's scholars, some four years prior to this time, it is barely possible, he might have remembered the original of the miniature; but, as we

have before stated, the young gentleman was not in the least sentimental in his college days, which was shameful, considering how many lovely girls had attended the madame's school.

Yes; this bronzed young veteran, in the service of Mars, was nothing but a raw recruit in the service of Cupid. Our Bob was a changed man from what he had been a few months before. He was tenderer, kinder, gentler; but he was very quiet and thoughtful, and, at times, dreamy. Before finding the picture, no man in the regiment had been gayer, merrier, or more light-hearted. The soldiers under his command noticed this change, and could give no satisfactory reason for it, although they discussed the matter time and time again. The character of the music played by the major had also undergone a change—all gay music was now omitted from his *repertoire*; he played nothing but sad, plaintive, melancholy airs. Old Corporal Johnson remarked: "The meejur hez got the wust symptings of luv—but I declar, I never seed him with enny young wimmin folks in my life." The statement of the corporal was a perfectly true one.

As we said before, the major sat gazing intently on the picture he held in his hand. "What heavenly blue eyes the angel has, and her hair; Oh, what glorious hair!" The love-stricken and enraptured officer pressed the portrait, again and again, to his hot, burning lips. It was the wonderfully painted hair, portrayed in the picture, that had, at the first, caused our Bob to lose his heart in

such a foolish way. How—how often, have the golden locks of a woman driven men mad with love sickness. What would have become of such women as Venus, the lovely Dido, and the fair Helen, if they had not been blondes? On the other hand, see how the fair sex becomes infatuated with some light-haired masculine idol, as witness, how Medea doted on the blonde locks of her dear Jason. Surely there are many Medeas at the present day. So we must not blame the young man for kissing the fair-haired beauty in the locket, and pressing the golden bauble to his heart, in a very silly and sentimental way. Men are always fools when in love, and the fairer the woman, the greater the fool, as a general thing; forgetting that beauty, after all, is but skin deep.

While the major was thus engaged in his maiden meditation, and, anything but fancy free, there came a rap, rap, at the door. In an instant, the picture was hastily thrust back in the young man's pocket, and Major Atkins assumed a grim, military aspect:

"Come in!" he ordered, in a sharp, commanding tone.

The door opened just then, and Doctor Balmaine entered.

"Ah, good morning, doctor, just the man I wanted to see. Sit down, and make yourself comfortable," and he pushed a chair toward his visitor. "So you were shot at again last night, and have called to see me about it, eh?"

Balmaine looked at the officer in perfect astonishment. "Perhaps Burke has given the major this information. He's the only man I've mentioned it to," thought the

physician. "Why, Majah, how did you happen to hear of it?" he queried.

Atkins looked at him in a curious way: "What would you give to find out, Doctor?" he asked.

"I'll swah, if it don't beat all, Majah. I nevah spoke a word about the mattah to any one, save Father Burke."

"Make your mind easy on that score," said Atkins. "I did not receive any information from the priest. You need have no more fear of Colonel Blow, Doctor. You finished him up last night. He is dead."

"Dead!" exclaimed Balmaine, in a tone of amazement: "why, Majah, you can't be in earnest?"

Atkins looked at the doctor and smiled: "You play your part well," said he. "Do you mean to tell me that you have not heard of Blow's dead body having been found this morning, down by Hites' farm? There was a beautiful bullet-hole through his head. They say that you assassinated him."

Balmaine's face became ashen pale, he stammered as he tried to speak, and rose from his chair, trembling with nervous excitement:

"Ma-jah, Ma-jah! I'm innocent of the charge, befoah Gawd, sah. I'll swah, I-I-I-I'll swah, sah!" he, at last, managed to exclaim.

Atkins looked at the doctor, with an incredulous expression on his face, and calmly remarked:

"I can not blame you, sir, for doing as you have done. It was your life or his life. Under the circumstances, although it is my painful duty to order your

arrest, I am inclined to the belief that the Federal authorities will ultimately acquit you."

"But, but!" gasped the doctor, "I'll swah to you, on my word of honah, as a Virginia gentleman, I'm innocent, sah—innocent."

The eyes of Balmaine seemed to be starting from their sockets, and great beads of perspiration stood out on his clammy white forehead.

"I hope you may be able to prove that, Doctor," said the major. "I propose to give you an immediate hearing. Now, please state to me every incident that occurred, from the time you left your house last night, up to the hour of half-past seven this morning?"

"So I have been watched, and every movement noted by this man," thought Balmaine. Then he gave a minute account of all that had transpired, omitting only, the finding of the letter. When he had concluded, Atkins said:

"I believe you have told me the truth, Doctor, but have you omitted nothing from your account? Have you not, in your pocket, a letter?"

Balmaine was cornered. There was nothing now left for him to do but tell all about it. So, in response to the major's query, he said:

"Yes," in a hesitating manner.

"Who is the letter from?" inquired Atkins.

"From Rev. Braxton Lewis to Colonel Blow," answered Balmaine.

"How do you know it was from Lewis?"

"I recognized the handwriting," replied the doctor.

"Will you be kind enough to hand me the letter, Doctor?"

Balmaine fumbled in his pocket for a moment, and drew out the copy he had drawn up at Father Burke's. Major Bob Atkins took the missive and read it carefully over.

"So there's a woman mixed up in the affair—well, I hope the rector of All-Innocents has good taste," and the officer smiled. "You are right in your conjectures, Doctor, I think you have a clear case against both Blow and Lewis. You are positive that you recognize this letter as being in the handwriting of Lewis?" and the major looked Balmaine steadily in the eye.

The doctor hesitated. It was evident to Atkins, that his question had embarrassed the physician; evidently, the gentleman knew something he did not care to communicate. Major Atkins was puzzled.

"You will swear that this is in the hand-writing of Lewis?" he repeated.

The doctor was mute, and looked down at the floor.

"Do you hear my question?" again demanded the officer.

"I have given you a copy of the lettah," said the doctor, quietly. "The original is in the handwriting of Lewis; I'll swah to that."

"And you refuse to show me the original letter? Have you omitted any part of it, in this copy?" persisted Atkins.

"For Gawd's sake, Majah! don't push me to the wall. I have omitted something. But, surely, you have enough, sah."

"Give me the original of this letter!" said the major, angrily; he was becoming vexed at Balmaine's evasion.

"I won't do it, sah!" retorted the doctor, his temper, in turn, becoming ruffled.

The major rose from his chair in a fury. Don't tell me you won't! Don't dare to tell me such a thing! Now, sir, I demand that letter! If you do not, immediately, comply with my request, I shall place you in irons, sir." And he reached toward the bell on his desk.

The paleness disappeared from the doctor's face, he rose to his feet, his cheek flushed, and his eyes sparkling with rage and defiance.

"I took you for a gentleman, sah," he said. "Do your worst. I defy you to force me to produce the original of that lettah. I have allowed you to torture me, until I am ashamed of myself. I am innocent of the charge made against me. I ask for immediate trial, sah, and, I demand your proof. Send me to jail at once! You will find, I will rot and die thah, befoah I answer anothah of your insolent questions." And Balmaine stood gazing at the dumbfounded major, while a sneer of contempt played across his quivering upper lip.

Atkins was too astonished, at this sudden outburst of passion, to speak.

"Ring your bell!" continued Balmaine, "call in your guard! I'm ready to go to jail, and don't care to converse with you any longah."

It was the major's turn to become confused: "Sit down! sit down!" he said, in a nervous sort of way. "I-ah, I-ah, owe you a sort of apology. I know you are perfectly innocent, Doctor, but the fact is, complaint was lodged against you, this morning, by a prominent citizen of this town, Croesus Hites. I have the complaint in my pocket—here it is." At the same time pulling out a paper, and with, it, a golden locket, which, falling on the floor, rolled over to Balmaine's feet; that gentleman picked it up, and as his eyes fell on the picture, an exclamation of surprise half escaped his lips. Then he handed the locket back to the major.

"Thank you," said Atkins, placing the recovered jewel back into his pocket again. "It's a little *souvenir* of mine, Doctor. In fact, a picture of my intended wife. A pretty woman, eh?" and he glanced, roguishly, at Balmaine. "Ah, these women, Doctor, and that woman above all—yes, she handed me the picture, when I started for the war. Shall I ever forget the kiss she gave me at parting?" And the warrior sighed, in that melancholy way that fond lovers have.

Balmaine's face was a study at that moment; he looked at Bob Atkins with an expression in which wonder and pleasure were combined.

"The lying audacity of this young scamp," thought the doctor.

"Don't you think she is pretty?" asked the major.

"Yes," answered Balmaine, dryly. "Yes, Lillian is a charming girl. A little too much spoiled by petting,

perhaps; but she has the making in her of a glorious woman, sah. Colonel Flournoy and his mother are responsible for the way in which Lillian has been brought up. Yes, Majah, I have had the honah of knowing Miss Fairfax since the day she was bawn, sah."

Bob Atkins could have crawled through a very small hole at that instant. The provost marshal had been caught in a downright lie, and he saw that the doctor knew it. Balmaine, at that moment, was enjoying the way in which the tables had been turned on his young persecutor.

In the meantime, our Bob's face was suffused by a scarlet blush, which, while it might have been becoming to a young maiden of sixteen, was certainly unbecoming to a bachelor of the major's age. Atkins looked out of the window, then at the floor, in his momentary confusion; anywhere—everywhere, save in the direction of Balmaine's eyes. He became hot and cold by turns; he was ashamed of himself, but, at the same time, delighted at having discovered the original of his portrait.

"She lives, moves, and is a reality, and is single, too;" thought Bob, and his heart fairly bounded with joy and happiness. Suddenly turning on the doctor, he asked, eagerly:

"So you know her; will you introduce me? Will you take me to her? If you will do this, you shall have anything you want. All the happiness of my future life depends on the smile of that woman," and he looked at Balmaine in a most imploring manner, while the doctor's face was o'erspread by a benignant, fatherly smile of pity.

"And she kissed you good-by?" asked Balmaine with much tenderness; "and she gave you her picture at parting. Ah! Majah, Majah, how could you?"

"Forgive me, Doctor, for having told you such a falsehood. Don't humiliate me any more."

Balmaine was for enjoying his triumph over the young man; assuming a frigid look, he remarked, with an air of much dignity; "Majah Atkins, enough of your confounded nonsense, sah! Please call the guard and have me taken to prison. You have charged me with murder. I demand an immediate trial by court martial, sah!"

"But, Doctor—I—I—There is no— or, rather—" stammered Bob; "the charge amounts to nothing. Colonel Blow was shot by my men, while trying to escape arrest. The matter was not made known, because I expected to entrap the false witnesses, whom Hites agreed to bring against you. It was for your sake that I expected to do all this. You are as free a man, at this moment, as I am."

Balmaine was overpowered by joy, that now no suspicion attached to him; his eyes became moist, and he reached his hand out to the major, who gave it a friendly grip.

"You will help me in this matter? You will be my friend?" pleaded Atkins.

"Yes! I'll swah, I'll do it, Majah, but you must conclude to baulk the designs of the Rev. Braxton Lewis."

Atkins started suddenly, as he recalled the contents of the letter; "sure enough," he said, a pang of jealousy rising in his heart. "I have a rival in that cursed scoun-

drel, and if she should love him," and the major ground his teeth in a savage manner.

"Why! Why!"—"What?" queried the doctor.

"I'll be a miserable man all the days of my life," said Atkins. However, 'faint heart never won fair lady.' Leave the matter entirely to me, I'll look out for her."

"Then I'll leave her safe keeping in your hands," remarked Balmaine, approvingly. "He is awfully in love with her already," thought the doctor. "I wonder what his feelings will be when he makes her personal acquaintance."

Then the two gentlemen discussed various matters regarding the Fairfax family, Balmaine giving the Major a full account of the young lady. At last they parted; it being agreed that the return of the locket, found on the battlefield of Bradyville, should be a pretext for calling up at the castle next morning, and, in this way, meeting Miss Lillian. In the meantime, Major Atkins never dreamed for a moment that the Colonel Flournoy spoken of was his former antagonist, whom he supposed was long since dead, and safely buried in the Hospital Cemetery at Nashville.

While Major Atkins and Balmaine had been holding their interview, other important business was being transacted in Greenwich Court House.

Colonel Flournoy and Miss Fairfax, after a pleasant ride, had reached town. Cantering up the main street of the village, they at last drew rein in front of a two-story brick building. Over the door of this building

was a dingy, weather-beaten sign. This sign read as follows:

“CRESUS HITES, BROKER AND BANKER.”

Dismounting, Colonel Flourney assisted Miss Fairfax from her horse. Leaving the animals in charge of a colored man, who stood loitering on the sidewalk, the two cousins entered the bank. The room in which Cresus Hites carried on his business was a long, narrow apartment with a low ceiling. A black walnut counter ran the whole length of the bank, while, at the far end, facing the front door, a rickety wooden railing fenced in what might have been called a private office. A massive iron safe, covered and brown with dust, stood back of the counter. The solemn ticking of an old-fashioned clock in the corner, near the front door, the occasional buzzing of some unfortunate bluebottle fly, entangled in the spider-webs that festooned the window panes, and, ever and anon, the chirping of a cricket, were the only signs, or sounds of life about the place. Two years of war had wrought all this change. No more noise and bustle about the bank; no more loud-talking drovers, chattering merchants, and jolly tobacco-planters congregated about the building to discuss the crops and politics. No longer did the busy clerks rush back and forward, chinking the musical golden and silver dollars on the hard counter. War had ruined the once prosperous town of Greenwich Court House, and the clerks, planters, drovers, traders, where were they? Some in Northern

prisons, some still fighting for the, already, "lost cause," and many—many others slept "the sleep that knows no waking," far from kindred and home, far away from dear old Virginia, 'neath the magnolia and cypress of the Sunny South. A feeling of sadness came creeping over Colonel Flournoy, as he looked around that now deserted room. He paused a moment, then rapped on the counter with his heavy riding-whip. A man arose from behind the railing and walked forward, crying out as he did so, in a tone of surprise:

"My Gawd, Flawnoy! How ah you? Glad to see you back again, shuah!" shaking the colonel's hand. Then, for the first time, noticing Miss Fairfax, he made a profound bow to the young lady, saying:—

"Ah! Miss Lill, whah have you kept yourself so long? I declah to goodness, you become handsomah every yeah. No wondah Braxey Lewis is in love with you—eh! eh! Don't blush now, Miss Lill. He's a mighty clevah man—make any girl happy, eh? eh?" and Cræsus Hites tried to convert his ugly leer into an insinuating smile. Yes, this dapper, little, foxy-looking man, with his smooth-shaved face, smoother tongue, and cat-like eyes, was the banker of the town. Many a time had he just missed being caught by the Federal authorities, in the act of furnishing aid and comfort to the South, but he had always managed to escape conviction. Ever guilty, but always appearing innocent, the authorities at Washington had been baffled time and time again by this rascal. His wealth was mostly invested in foreign

stocks, safe out of reach of the Yankees, and, for this reason his audacity, at times, was wonderful. So he laughed his enemies to scorn, and, under pretense of carrying on a small banking business at Greenwich Court House, in reality was engaged in enterprises of great magnitude. His son, who was his partner, was a blockade-runner, and during those times the two amassed an immense fortune from the profits made off of their suffering countrymen.

When Hites spoke to Miss Fairfax of Braxton Lewis, the face of Jacques Flournoy flushed with anger, and he looked at Lillian in an uneasy and displeased manner. "Can she be interested in Lewis? can she fancy such a fortune-seeker?" thought Jacques. Turning to the banker, he said, in a brusque way, "Come! come! Hites, stop your flattery; I have some important business to transact, and am in a hurry. I want to raise some money this morning."

"Certainly! certainly, Colonel," answered the banker; "wait a minute, Miss Lill, and I'll bring you a chah," and Hites rolled out a large cushioned seat, placing it close to the front window.

The colonel and the banker retired to the back part of the room, and Lillian looked down on the street from her perch at the window. Nearly all the stores opposite the bank were closed up and deserted. In front of the Jefferson Tavern, the principal hotel of the place, a lot of aged loafers were seated. These gentlemen were discussing the "Wah;" telling what they would do if they were General Lee; expectorating streams of tobacco-

juice over the pavement; scowling at the Federal soldiers who passed by; occasionally rising in a body and entering the hotel to drink to the health of the "Confederacy, sah." Once in awhile, a few horses would pass down the street towards the Shenandoah river, led by some perspiring "contraband" attired in sky blue cavalry-pants and worn out artillery-jacket; hatless, shoeless, trudging through the rapidly-drying mud, the dusky servant of "Massa Linkum's boys."

At such times the aged loafers on the hotel porch would indulge in considerable undertone talking, such as, "I'll be goll derned, Uncle Cass, if that thah mah don't look like the colt that wah stole off my place last month;" or, "By Gawd, that thah sorrel is mine, I'll swah to that, Uncle Pete." It was astonishing how these men recognized their own property.

Lillian waited patiently to see some one pass whom she knew, but, all in vain. Occasionally, a woman, hoopless and clad in calico, with a green sun-bonnet covering the head, would scamper across the street, pitcher in hand, out shopping for salt, sugar and milk. Not much money to spend for silks and laces in those days.

The sun beamed through the window warmer and warmer, as the noonday approached, and Lady Lillian basked lazily in its loving rays. The monotonous ticking of the clock in the corner, and the low hum of voices in the back office, made her ladyship feel drowsy. The beautiful eyelids closed over the dreamy eyes, her head dropped gently over on the arm of the chair, and Miss Fairfax was fast asleep.

Now, it happened just about that time, that Major Bob Atkins, was strolling from headquarters down towards the river. Noticing two fine-looking horses standing in front of the bank, the officer stopped to look at them. The major was a great admirer of fine horse-flesh, and was much pleased with the appearance of these animals. The one having on a lady's saddle, especially impressed him, as he had been looking around, for some time, for just such a horse. Atkins at once came to the conclusion that he would buy the mare, if she was for sale. Turning to the negro, who was holding the horses, he asked.

"Where is the owner of these nags?"

"He's in the bank dah, boss," answered the saddle-colored individual.

Bob Atkins walked up the steps and entered the building without any more ado. The door closed softly behind him, and there—there in front of him, was the sleeping beauty, the original of his portrait, Lillian Fairfax! The sunlight kissed the glorious mist of wavy golden ringlets that clustered around her white forehead; the delicate flush of the rose tinted her cheeks; the purple-veined eyelids, with their long lashes, drooped down over the hidden eyes like a pair of twin snow-bells; from her crimson, half-parted lips, the soft, regular breathing of the sleeper, came with each rise and ebb of the rounded chest. Bob Atkins started forward, and leaned over the beautiful dreamer. Looking down upon that lovely face, he stood entranced, spell-bound; she was more than his fancy had painted her. He heard nothing but the gentle

respiration of the maiden; he saw nothing but the woman he loved, so pure, so innocent, so like an angel. Had Major Atkins looked around at that moment, he might have noticed a pair of fierce eyes gleaming at him. An instant later, the harsh "swish" of a riding-whip sounded through the room, and a tingling sensation on the major's shoulders, brought him back to his senses again.

Atkins turned in sudden rage and fury, and there, before him, face to face, was his former antagonist of the battle field of Bradyville, whom he supposed dead. The recognition was mutual, both gentleman turned deathly pale and started back in amazement.

"Have—have you come to life again? I—I—I thought you were dead," gasped the major.

"Not dead—not dead yet. Time at last makes all things even. If you are a gentleman, sir, you will demand satisfaction. I struck you with my riding-whip. You scoundrel! You insulter of women!" Just at this instant, Miss Fairfax opened her eyes, and, startled by the sound of the colonel's angry voice, sprang to her feet. Her glance fell full upon Bob Atkins, and rushing forward, she exclaimed, throwing her arms about the officer's neck:—

"I knew you would come back to me!—I knew you would come back to me, my darling! my dear, R. A. from Toledo!" She was bewildered, and, as yet, half asleep.

On the faces of Colonel Flournoy and Croesus Hites, a look of perfect wonder was depicted.

"Lillian! Miss Fairfax! Are you mad? are you crazy?" shouted the irate Jacques.

At the sound of her cousin's voice, Lillian turned, and ran to him; then burying her face on his bosom, she said: "Where am I—where am I? Oh! Jacques; I dreamt that he came back to me, and that he loved me. Please take me home, dear. Take me back to Aunt Janet." And she sobbed like a little child.

"I shall demand an explanation, and satisfaction for this, sir, to-morrow! Do you hear me, you scoundrel, to-morrow!" And the colonel shook his clenched fist at Atkins.

"The sooner, the better," replied the major, savagely, as he walked out of the bank, in his most stately manner.

In a short time, Lady Lillian became calm enough to start for home. The two cousins did not exchange a single word, during all that long ride back to Castle Belvoir.

When they arrived at the house, Aunt Janet was awaiting their coming.

"Why, what in the world is the matter with you, my child!" she exclaimed, noticing that her ladyship had been weeping.

"I don't know—I don't know! Ask Jacques." And the heiress threw herself on the sofa, and cried as if her heart would break.

Janet cast a withering glance of scorn at her son. "What ails the child?" she demanded, in a tone of sharp inquiry.

"I was a fool, mother, for taking Lillian to town. It all turned out as you said it would. She has been insulted by the Yankee commandant."

"And you killed the scoundrel? Shot him down like a dog?" queried the matron, eagerly, her black eyes snapping with anger.

"He or I, shall die, to-morrow, mother," said Jacques, walking toward the window

Lillian rose to her feet: "If you kill him, Jacques Flournoy, I will never forgive you. If you kill him, I will take my own life. My God—my God! He is the only man I ever loved." Her arms dropped to her side, her head bent forward, and Miss Fairfax lay senseless on the floor. The excitement of the morning had been too much for her.

That was the first intimation Aunt Janet and the colonel had that Lillian was in love. It was a revelation to them at once painful and surprising. Together, the mother and son, picked up their pet, tenderly and tearfully, and carried her off to her own apartments, where we drop the curtain for the present.

CHAPTER IV.

Croesus Hites Relates a Fairy Tale.

Night had drawn its sable curtain over the Shenandoah Valley, and mountain and lowland were wrapped in sombre blackness. A great mass of threatening clouds loomed up in the southwest, outlined against the darker sky, by the flashes of lightning that, ever and anon, gleamed out along the distant horizon. The wind came in sudden gusts up the streets of Greenwich Court House. The rickety shutters rasped and rattled on their hinges, and the signs swung to and fro, on their rusty fastenings, groaning and creaking. The moanings of the air, as it swept over the chimneys and around the corners, sounded like the wailings of lost souls, sobbing out their agony to the demons lurking in the black, haunted shadows of the night.

In compliance with military orders, all lights in the town were extinguished, and people obliged to remain in-doors after nine o'clock. The streets were deserted, except by the few mounted guards, who patrolled the neighborhood of Federal head-quarters. Mischief, however was brewing in town, almost under the very eyes of its Yankee commandant.

Major Atkins had retired to bed, but sleep had deserted

him, owing to the exciting events of the day. His mind was much disturbed, on account of his singular encounter with Miss Fairfax and Colonel Flournoy. Was he not to meet the colonel in mortal combat on the morrow? What man can rest easy on the very eve of a duel? Besides, there were many complications in this case. His quarrel was with the kinsman of the woman he loved—could he harm one of her flesh and blood? Supposing he should kill Flournoy—would she ever forgive him—would she ever love him afterward? Still it seemed impossible to avoid the meeting. If he were killed, would she grieve for him? Strange that she should know him, for had she not called him her “dear R. A., from Toledo?”

Why had she called him by his initials? The major tried, and tried in vain, to recollect having met Miss Fairfax somewhere, but failed to convince himself of the fact. “One thing is certain,” thought Atkins, “the lady has seen me before. People fall in love at first sight, sometimes; perhaps this has happened in her case.” This was consolation to the young egotist, but still he felt dissatisfied.

A thousand and one ideas suggested themselves to the officer’s mind, and the more he thought, the more his ideas became confused. He could not rest, so, rising from his bed, he lit a cigar and took a seat near the open window. The cool wind fanned his feverish brow, and the tobacco acted as a sedative to his unstrung nerves. Under their combined influence, the major fell into a dreamful reverie.

Now, while this gallant officer was thus employed, parties, within a short distance of him, were plotting his destruction. Almost opposite headquarters, near the Jefferson Tavern, was Crœsus Hites' bank. Hites, who usually spent most of his time in town, since a widower, had his sleeping apartments over his place of business. On this eventful night, in one of the inner rooms of the building, two men might have been seen seated at a table, in close proximity to a pitcher of water, some glasses, and a suspicious looking black bottle.

It was evident, that these men had been talking for some time, for the face of Crœsus Hites was ghastly pale from excitement, while that of the Rev. Braxton Lewis was flushed with anger, and too oft-repeated libations. Crœsus Hites had been relating to the rector the full particulars of the morning's meeting between Miss Fairfax and Major Atkins. To say that the rector of All-Innocents had stormed, after the banker's recital, would but feebly express his actions, for Lewis had raged and acted like an insane person—he had been exceedingly profane, too, which for a clergyman, was very wrong. Hites had been astonished beyond measure at this unlooked-for outburst of passion on the part of the rector, and, finally, after much difficulty, had succeeded in calming him.

"Where do you suppose the scoundrel first met her," queried Braxton Lewis.

"I'm shuah I don't know," answered Hites. "See heah, Braxey, thah's no use of your talking about the mattah any moah; you talk like a crazy man. Why, sah,

thah's no use crying ovah spilt milk. Cheer up! Don't act the fool now; do you heah?"

The rector shook his head angrily, while an ugly scowl lingered on his handsome face. "To think that all my well laid plans of the last three years have been upset, and have amounted to nothing. To be sure, I never proposed to the girl. She was so young, I thought it would do no harm to wait for a while. She acted as though she liked me, the heartless jade! Oh! the humiliation! the mortification! to think that a miserable, sneaking, mudsill Yankee has won her love. Curse the hound! I'll kill him for this," and the rector of All Innocents rose from his seat and paced the floor like a madman.

"Thah you go again, Braxey," interposed the banker. "Sit down and be calm! I have a story to tell you *apropos* of this affah. Keep quiet, for Gawd's sake! Heah! Take a little of this whisky; it will brace you up," pushing the bottle over to the rector, who poured out a large glass and quaffed it down at one gulp. "See the chances I have thrown away," persisted the excited clergyman, who would talk. "There was that Pittsburgh heiress whom I met at 'Berkeley Springs' three years ago. She was a Yankee, to be sure, but her cursed old 'abolition' father was dead. Why, she had stacks of money, railroad stocks, coal mines in Ohio, oil wells in Pennsylvania—a cool million, if she was worth a cent. I could have gotten her at the drop of my hat. There was that Savannah heiress, with cotton lands in

Georgia, rice lands in Carolina, Chicago real estate by the square mile, and niggers by the hundred. She made a dead set at me. Bah! I've given up all my chances for Lillian Fairfax, simply because of her family."

The banker smiled, "and the Fairfax estate—you might add that," he said.

"Yes! her cursed estate. That's the truth of it, Hites. But, enough of this! You said you had something to tell me; out with it!" and the rector reclined in his chair, gazing at his companion in an expectant manner.

Croesus Hites hesitated for a moment and looked up towards the ceiling, then he removed a quid of tobacco from his mouth, and clearing his throat, said:

"I'm going to tell you a story, Braxey; a story, my boy, with a moral; a story which has some points in it that you may recognize and become offended at. This story is not like any one in the 'Arabian Nights,' but you may become a second Sinbad, if you want. Shall I commence?"

The rector nodded his head, in token of his assent.

"Well, once on a time, (all stories commence that way Braxey), thah was a princess dwelt in a beautiful castle, on a mountain side. She wah famed for her beauty and for her wealth. Her parents were both dead, but she had an old dragon to guard her, in the shape of an aunt. She had a cousin too, a strong young warrior, who had been disabled in battle.

"Now, this princess had many lovahs, who came and knelt at her feet in adoration, supplicants for her love,

her heart and her hand, and her many thousand broad acres. Among the lovahs of the princess, wah a young man, proud, handsome, haughty of mien, and of ancient pedigree; he wah poor, very poor, the aforesaid pedigree being about all his ancestahs had left him.

"This lovah, could not live on his good name alone; for a good name won't buy running-horses, dawgs, or good whiskey, neither will it afford cawd-playing, pokah, for instance, nor pay a fellows' gambling debts. (Don't be offended Braxey.) The lovah wah not a fool; he saw that a marriage with the princess would afford the means to pay off his numerous I O U's, for the rogue wah a great borrower. So he danced dalliance in the footsteps of the princess, smiled at her, sang love ballads to her, whispered words of affection into her ever willing ear; in fact, made as great an ass of himself as the requirements of the society of that epoch demanded. In the interval, he flattered himself on having made a conquest of the lady's heart. The princess wah a sly-boots, howevah, for she said to herself, "this man does not love me, but my money. I will encourage the young knight, because his attentions are pleasant, and thah's nothing like having a dozen strings to one's bow. I will accept his smiles, his honied words of flattery, and his unmeant adulations. I will lead him up to the altah of love, and sacrifice the unsuspecting lamb. For, in the far off North, the princess had met a knight, and to him had plighted her faith and troth, blind to his obscurity of birth, blind to his poverty, loving him like Titania did her asinine

lovah, without knowing why. So she concluded to marry the Northern knight, finding that the Southern knight wah a trickstah, gamestah, and fortune huntah."

Braxton Lewis jumped to his feet. "You lie, you scoundrel!" he cried. "Enough of your insulting insinuations; I shall stand them no longer. Beware, sir, how you use such language to me again," and picking up his hat, the rector started for the door.

Crœsus Hites laughed scornfully. "Don't be a fool, Braxey," he called out. "Come back and sit down again. It's the first time I've had a chance to talk to you plainly. I assure you, sah, that my remarks wah intended for youah own good. Just allow me to finish my story, and you will see, at once, that my motives in telling it wah of the most friendly charactah," and the aged hypocrite smiled to himself at the idea of being anybody's friend.

Crœsus Hites hated the rector, but, for certain reasons of his own, he wished to conciliate Lewis, just at that time. The rector had been the banker's pliant tool on more than one occasion. Hites knew that he could not afford to lose Lewis; hence, he was a little anxious for a moment, lest the rector should leave. Braxton Lewis returned, however, and again resumed his seat.

"I'll let you finish your story, Hites," he said, "but be very careful how you word your language next time. I'm angry enough now. Don't make me lose entire control of my temper, for I'm a desperate man. Ready for anything—even blood," he added, and glared at the

banker in an ugly manner. "Now go ahead, and be careful not to be personal."

"Well," said the banker, continuing his story: "this young knight from the South, had a friend—a very rich friend—who had aided him on many an occasion, loaning the knight much money at sundry times, and nevah charging him interest, on the same. Yes! He loaned the Southern knight money, to the tune of a good many thousand dollahs, of course, expecting that his young friend would marry the Princess, and repay him.

"Now, when the knight's rich friend, found that the heart of the princess had been won by anothah, he wah angry on his own account, and also for the knight's sake. So the rich friend concocted a plan, by which the Southern knight wah to be avenged, and, at the same time, handsomely rewarded.

"This rich friend wah not, himself, happy. Two causes conspired to destroy his peace of mind. He wanted more money. He was hopelessly in love—yes, the old fool was dead in love, with a woman, as demure as a church mouse, and as proud as Lucifer. The woman, whom the rich man loved, wah beloved by the cousin of the princess, the wounded warrior of the castle."

Braxton Lewis leaned forward, listening eagerly, to this part of the story, a look of satisfaction and of surprise depicted on his features.

"So, ho!" he said; "you too, are in love, and hopelessly. Well, misery loves company. It's Ivy Nelson; and, Jacques Flournoy bars the way to your happiness!"

Croesus Hites scowled at the rector, and continued:—

“The rich man, the Southern knight’s friend, put his wits to work, and discovered a way to make both the knight and himself happy. He coaxed the Southern knight, to be more devoted to the princess than evah; he drew up a written contract with the young man, to the effect, that he should prevail upon the princess, to copy certain lettahs. These lettahs, contained mattah of a very treasonable charactah, against the Government, undah which the princess lived. Then the princess, gave these lettahs to her warrior-cousin, to carry to the enemies of the Government. Then, the rich man informed the Government, that the princess and her cousin, wah conspiring against it. “What wah the result? Why, the immense estates of the princess, wah confiscated and sold by the Government, while the warrior wah tried, condemned, and shot, as a spy.”

At this point, the banker paused, looking inquiringly at the rector, who sat bewildered, in his seat, at the cold-blooded proposition. At last the banker growled out:

“What do you think of it?”

“What do I think of it?” gasped Lewis. “A pretty idea for you, Hites—very pretty. Your rival, killed and put out of the way! My princess, robbed of her estate! Bah! I’ll go; I’ve heard enough of your nonsense. It’s the worst told fairy tale, I ever listened to.” And the rector rose to his feet again.

“Sit down and allow me to finish!” cried the banker, in an angry voice, whereupon, the rector again resumed his seat, remarking:

"Hurry up with your story. I must go home, it's growing late, and I am afraid I shall have trouble in slipping past those infernal Yankee pickets."

The banker continued his story: "The idea of having the estate of the princess confiscated wah a good one. The Government wah hard up for money, and the immense tracts of land, and the castle belonging to the princess wah bought in for a mere song, by the rich man's silent partner. You see the point now, don't you, Braxey? In the contract, between the Southern knight and his rich friend, it wah also stipulated, that the knight wah to have two hundred and fifty thousand dollahs in English securities, for the services rendered by him, or, in lieu thereof, one-third of the estate formerly belonging to the princess. You are satisfied now—I can see that by your face—eh ? eh ?" and the banker chuckled and rubbed his fingers together, at the prospective large addition to his fortune. The rector struck the table with his clenched fist, while an oath escaped from his lips:

"You are right, Hites!" he exclaimed "it's a bargain—Here's my hand! By heavens, I'll make that haughty beauty beg, on her knees, for my love, and I'll spurn her afterward, the cold-hearted coquette! But, but, see here, old fellow, what's to become of my rival, the Yankee major? You have forgotten to dispose of him."

The banker smiled. "Listen," said he, taking a letter from his pocket and reading:

"STRASBURG, *June 1*, 1863.

"FRIEND HITES:—The advance of Wade Hampton's

command will strike Greenwich Court House by midnight, on the 2d. We will finish up Major Atkins this time, surely. Lee and Longstreet expect to spend the 4th of July in Philadelphia—hence the present movement toward the Pennsylvania border.

“Yours,

“BUD ROUTLEDGE.”

Braxton Lewis cast a look of genuine admiration at Crœsus Hites, who quietly remarked: “Braxey, if you let that Yankee majah leave this place alive, you are not the man I take you for.”

“Quite right,” responded the rector, the commandant shall swing before he’s three days older. Did he not cause Colonel Blow to be assassinated? That will be a sufficient reason for hanging him.”

“I see that youah head’s level,” said the banker.

There was silence for the space of a moment, and then both gentlemen reached over and filled their glasses from the bottle.

“Here’s success to Lee!” and Braxton Lewis raised his glass to toast the illustrious general. Then, suddenly, a puzzled expression crossed the rector’s face. “See here Hites,” he said, “supposing Lee is successful and the Southern arms win the day, what becomes of our real estate speculation; it will be impossible then to confiscate the Fairfax estate?”

The banker laughed. “Lee will nevah be successful,” he said; “the Yankees will whip him out of his boots. Only let our army get far enough into the North,

and once cut off from their base of supplies, they will be annihilated and destroyed. Bah! Braxey, these fools in Richmond know nothing of the strength of the North. These Yankees can afford to lose three men to our one, and nevah feel it. I have been in the Eastern and Western States often enough to know that."

Braxton Lewis looked at the speaker in surprise and indignation. "Knowing all this, you urged your friends to go into this war?" he cried, hotly. "And so you are a traitor to the South. Hites, you are the last man on earth I ever expected this from."

The banker laughed, and sneered at the rector. "I went into this wah to make money, Braxey," he said. "This conflict wah inevitable; it must have come some time or othah, and no bettah time than now, for me. Understand me, my boy, I'm for Cræsus Hites first, last and all the time. What in the d—l do I care for the North or South. I've made a fortune out of this wah already, and when I secure one-half of the Fairfax estate and the heart of Ivy Nelson, I'll stop blockade-running and be one of the most loyal citizens of the United States that you evah saw. Bah! Away with your sickly sentimentality about the divine right of States, and all that sort of thing. I'm a Southerner, now, for it pays best; I'll be a rampant Union man, as soon as I see the money's on that side. The wah pays me, sah; that's the reason I'm in favor of it. You remembah I sold every last niggah I had, just as soon as the wah broke out. Give me a little credit, Braxey, I'm no fool," and he dashed his empty glass down on the table.

Braxton Lewis pondered a moment, and then said: "You are quite right, Hites. In this world we must always be selfish, and look out for number one. I have always been too just, and too generous myself."

"Pshaw!" interposed the banker; "don't preach your high-toned morality to me, Braxey. I have moah respect for a man who makes a fortune, no mattah how, than for a fellow who marries an heiress, and steals an estate in that way—bah!"

"Here's to the Fairfax estate, without marrying it!" cried the rector, and the two worthies drained their glasses again. Braxton Lewis pulled out his watch and looked at the hour. "It's half-past eleven o'clock," he exclaimed; "Hampton ought to be here in half an hour, or so. Let's go to the window and peep out. Yankee head quarters are right across the way, and I should like to see the fun when our boys in gray come galloping up the street."

The rector's idea, seemed to strike the banker favorably. "All right," he answered; "hold up a minute, though, until I put out the light," and, the lamp being extinguished, the two groped their way in the darkness, to the front part of the house, and, cautiously opened the closed shutters.

The night was dark, but the figures of two mounted pickets could be indistinctly seen, walking their horses, slowly up and down, before the Yankee commandant's quarters. The wind had died away, and a light drizzly rain was falling. Silence brooded over the sleeping town.

"It will be all right this time," whispered the rector.

The banker shook his head, dubiously: "I hope so," he said, "but Atkins has always been so cursed lucky, I'm afraid to trust him."

Just at that instant, a mounted rider came galloping post-haste up the street, and pulled rein in front of the pickets.

"Halt!" came the warning cry of the sentinels. "Who goes there?"

"A friend!"

"Advance friend, and give the countersign!"

A parley, of a moment or so, took place between the pickets and the stranger. The conversation was carried on, in such a low tone of voice, that the rector and banker were unable to hear a word that passed, much to their disgust. When the mysterious rider dashed off down street again, in the blackness of the night, the hearts of Hites and Lewis beat faster and faster with nervous excitement; they had an instinctive feeling that the Yankees had been warned of Hampton's near approach.

"Some cursed traitor, has told them of Hampton's coming," hissed the banker, between his clenched teeth. "Look, Braxey! what's that light ovah thah, by the rivah? It's the bridge burning. The Yankee pickets have fired the bridge across the Shenandoah. The rivah's so high, I'm afraid Hampton can't cross to-night."

"Suddenly, there was a dull sound, as if an explosion had ocured, and a lurid glare shot across the sky, while

the streets of the town were lighted up as bright as day. Ringing out on the night air, came the clarion notes of a bugle from Federal head quarters, and the shouts of soldiers, the neighing of excited horses, the cries of officers, yelling out their orders, commingled in a noisy tumult and din. Major Bob Atkins, had indeed been warned of Hampton's approach.

The major was a cautious man; he had posted guards several miles out of town, and was always careful, to hold his command against a surprise. His pickets had orders, which they were fully instructed to carry out; one of these read as follows: "If the rebels advance, in force, from the south-east, burn the long bridge across the Shenandoah river." The major's order had been fully obeyed, and the venerable structure, was enveloped in a mass of angry flames. The Federal cavalymen deployed in the street, in front of head quarters, each man standing in line besides his horse's head, awaiting further orders. These bronzed warriors were silent now, with their eyes fixed upon their young commander, who had taken his position in front, and was quietly surveying the troops, as if they were on dress-parade. In the mean time, the cries of the baffled and enraged men, under Hampton, could be heard across the river, which was so swollen by the rain, that any attempt to ford it, would have been madness. It was not Major Atkins' luck that saved his command that night, but it was his foresight. He was extremely wise for one so young.

"So, I must leave this place, perhaps never more to

return," thought the sorrowful commandant, and he inwardly groaned at his bad luck. His darling left to the mercies of her enemies, and he powerless, now, to watch over and protect her. War, cruel war, is no respecter of youth, innocence, or beauty, and finer feelings must be crushed by the iron sense of duty. No time now, for hopeless repining; the enemy was too close at hand and delay was only dangerous.

"We have four hours start of them, at least," said the major to his adjutant, Captain Grey. "They will hardly try to ford the river before daylight, and their horses must be pretty well tired out. Grey! will you please tell Schroeder to come here." A tall light-haired musician came forward. "Hand me your cornet, Ernst!" said the commandant, and taking the silver instrument from the bugler's hand, Bob Atkins placed it to his lips and breathed out his inmost soul's feeling in strains of sweetest music.

"If thou still art true,
I will be constant too,
And will wed none but you,
Robin Adair!"

As the plaintive melody rang out clearly and tenderly on the midnight air, and as its last notes died away in the echoing distance, the major handed the instrument back to his bugler. "Thank you, Ernst," he said. "Now sound the call 'to horse.' Are you all ready! Forward!" and there was a mighty clattering of sabres and carbines, a rattling of spurs, and the hoofs of seven-

hundred horses, resounded with a dull thundering thud against the wet clayey soil, while each cavalryman bent forward in his saddle, plying his spurs, and like a troop of phantoms, the Yankee horsemen sped out of town, with darkness before them, and the light of the burning bridge behind them. Major Bob Atkins had, again given the Confederates the slip.

"Curse the cowardly dogs! See how they run!" shouted the banker, leaning out the window.

"Hurrah! Hurrah!" cried the rector, dancing around the room with glee. "Hurrah! Greenwich Court House is free from the mudsills. Where's your flag? Put it out of the window, Hites."

An hour later, men, women and children flocked out on the street. The church bells rang their welcome to the Confederates on the other side of the river. All was joy and happiness in the town, for had not the accursed barbarian invaders departed? Cræsus Hites' bank displayed the stars and bars from its front window; the owner of the building usually carried the flag of the South in his boot-leg, when the Yankees occupied the town.

One heart was filled with sadness on this night—that of Lillian Fairfax. All the afternoon of that eventful day her ladyship had been content to lie curled up in bed, thinking over the exciting incidents of the morning. She had seen her old-time lover and she was happy, even if the meeting had taken place under inauspicious circumstances. How handsome he had grown—he knew her too—had he not pressed her to his heart? Her lady-

ship had a vague impression that he had. "I know he loves me—I know it," she murmured to herself.

What earthly reason Miss Fairfax had for "knowing" the condition of the major's heart, we know not; certainly the gentleman had not spoken a word to her in his life, nevertheless, she had an instinctive feeling that Bob loved her. Her ladyship did not rest content, until she had forced a promise from Colonel Flournoy, that under no circumstances would he meet the Yankee commandant on the morrow.

Assured of her lover's future safety from that quarter, she was more tranquil, and ceased weeping. In the meantime, Aunt Janet concocted a mess of catnip tea, and, notwithstanding the remonstrances of the young woman, obliged Lillian to take several doses of the herb. Not that Aunt Janet thought catnip tea a specific for love—ah no! but Lillian was feverish—she might be going to have congestion of the brain—hence the need of anticipating any such occurrence.

"Oh, darling!" cried Aunt Janet, as she sat by Lillian's bed-side, watching the love-sick maiden, "your symptoms are very bad, but I hope—I hope you are not in love with that horrid Yankee officer—that miserable mudsill, Robert Atkins!" Then her ladyship rose up in bed, her eyes sparkling, her cheeks flushed with sudden excitement:

"Oh, Aunty!" she exclaimed, throwing her arms around Janet Flournoy's neck, "Is his name Robert Atkins? Yes! yes! it must be—R. A. stands for Robert Atkins. I thought it might be Robin Adair."

"Can it be that you never knew his name before? And to fall in love with him! I'm ashamed of you, my child!" said the old lady, chidingly.

"Oh! I can't help loving him, Aunty. I love him now; I loved him when I went to Madame Bonbon's School. I never knew his name, for the dear fellow never spoke to me in his life."

Janet Flourney looked down in pity on the golden-haired girl who reclined on her bosom. "Well, pet," she said sadly, "I am very sorry you ever met the man. I'm afraid that Madame Bonbon's educational institution was only a school for the cultivation of romance and sentiment. Dear! Dear! I wonder what the Rev. Braxton Lewis will think of this? Did you ever dream, Lillian, that he loved you?"

Her Ladyship's lip curled in scorn. "I hate Braxton Lewis," she exclaimed. "If he were the last man on earth, I would not marry him."

Aunt Janet's eyes opened in amazement at the positive way in which Lillian spoke. "He's such a pious, good young man; I always thought and hoped you would marry Mr. Lewis," said the old lady.

"I hate good young men! I'm afraid of pious young men! You always said the same thing yourself," cried the heiress.

"That's so," said the old lady, smilingly; then she bent over and kissed the white forehead. "There! there! Lie down now and take a good nap," and, kissing her niece again, Janet Flourney left the room.

Shortly afterwards her ladyship fell asleep, and dreamed of whom?—the Yankee commandant of Greenwich Court House. About midnight Miss Fairfax awakened with a start, and opened her frightened blue eyes. The room was lighted up by the glare of the fire in the valley below. She sprang from her bed and rushed to the window. The view was grand in the extreme. The flames lifted their scarlet heads and rolled heavenward. The lurid light and glare of the fire illuminated the country for miles around, while the steeples and spires of the town were reflected in gigantic shadows against the dark clouds in the West.

Lillian raised the window and looked out. Up from the valley came floating the sweet notes of "Robin Adair."

"Thank God! my Robert is safe. The music is for me—I know it—I feel it," murmured her ladyship. Just then there was a sudden rap at the door.

"Who is there?" she cried.

"It's Jacques," replied a voice from the hall, outside. "I have brought you up my field-glasses, Lillian—what a splendid fire the bridge makes."

She opened the door: "Jacques!" and her voice was pitched in its most plaintive chord. "You won't kill Major Atkins, will you, dear?"

The colonel frowned and growled out, "No danger of that, Lillian, your Yankee lover has run away, and our flag is floating proudly on this side of the Shenandoah. Good night!"

She closed the door, and again returned to the win-

dow. Through the glasses she could see the retreating Federal cavalry flying eastwardly along the pike, until at last they became a mere speck in the distance, and finally disappeared in the shadows of the night.

Lillian went back to bed, and buried her face in the pillows. "Our flag," she muttered to herself. "It's not my Robert's flag, though," and, for the first time in her life, Miss Fairfax half wished herself a Yankee.

What prejudices will not love overcome? Then, romantic, girl-like, she sobbed herself to sleep.

CHAPTER V.

Randolph Nelson's Legacy.

It was on a mid-day, in the latter part of August, almost three months subsequent to the events narrated in the last chapter, that Doctor Balmaine, while taking his dinner, received a summons from York Hall, the country seat of the Hon. Randolph Nelson. The message, written in a small, delicate hand, read as follows:—

"YORK HALL, *August 29, 1863.*

DEAR DOCTOR:—Will you be kind enough to come to the hall as soon as possible. Papa is much worse; he had another sinking spell this morning.

"Yours sincerely,

"IVY NELSON."

Doctor Balmaine rang a bell connected with his stable; a colored boy answered the call. "Saddle the roan mare, 'Galen," ordered the doctor, as rising from the table, he walked out into his front office where, taking a cigar from the cupboard, he sat down to enjoy his *post-prandial* smoke. "So he's worse," soliloquized Balmaine; "well, Nelson's days are numbered; he can't last much longah; his three-score yeahs and ten are past and gone forevah. How fortunate, and yet unfortunate it is, that Nelson evah married. Fortunate, that he has such a lovely daughtah to cheah and comfort his declining yeahs; unfortunate, that he leaves an only child wholly alone, unprotected, and at the mercy of a cold, heartless world. He is the last of his line, and when he dies, Gawd only knows what is to become of her," and the doctor puffed away at his cigar, and ruminated for a moment.

Suddenly his face was lighted up by a happy smile, as though some pleasant idea had stolen into his fancy: "I have it now," he continued, "a reconciliation must be brought about between Nelson and Jacques Flournoy. The old man acted hastily, when he broke off Ivy's engagement two yeahs ago. Curse this thing of politics, anyway; it broke up half the love affahs in this neighborhood. Now, thah wah Flournoy, as brave and handsome a young fellah, as evah lived; and thah wah Ivy Nelson, that little brown-haired, brown-eyed woman, as thoroughbred a Virginia woman as evah wah bawn.

"I've known all the young women around Greenwich Court House, during the last thirty-five yeahs; but thah's

not one, who is the peah, for beauty and purity of charactah of Ivy Nelson. And the old man, on account of political differences, ordered Jacques nevah to set foot in York Hall again.

"I'm certain Ivy loves Jacques yet. Didn't she cry for a whole week, aftah the news came of his being wounded at Bradyville? It's certain from that, she has not forgotten Jacques, notwithstanding the promise she made her father. A sensible woman like Ivy would not cry unless her heart wah still slightly affected.

"If she wah hysterical now, like Lillian Fairfax, who carried on for a whole month after Major Atkins left town, I might think her love wah only imaginary, for Miss Fairfax has recovered sufficiently to flirt desperately with half the young Confederate officers in town, in addition to making the Rev. Braxton Lewis her abject slave. I'll swah, these women are curious, anyhow. Lillian and Ivy, both weep ovah their lovahs, one seems to remember, howevah, and one seems to forget. Bah! what are a woman's tears after all, but a little chloride of sodium, and a few drops of distilled watah.

I suppose that the reflex action transmitted from the heart, the supposed seat of the soul, squeezes the lachrymal glands, and out flow the tears. Moses struck the rock in the wilderness, and out gushed the watahs, and I rather think that Atkins and Flournoy played the part of Moses in these two instances. That's my diagnosis, anyhow. But Ivy! Ivy! and Balmaine shook his head, his mind still troubled by doubt. "She must not be left

alone and unprotected. Nelson must annul the promise he forced from her. She must and shall marry Jacques Flournoy. Nelson must overcome his prejudices, in this case, at least. I shall talk plainly to the old man, on the subject, to-day. Let me see. Ivy was twenty-six in 1861, when the match was broken off; she is twenty-eight now, and, when a woman is twenty-eight or thirty, it's past the time for her to marry. If she waits much longah, she becomes an old maid. A peach is not worth eating until it's ripe; prior to the ripening point, it's green and insipid; aftah the ripening point, it's entirely too soft and mellow. Give me a girl of twenty-eight or thirty; I don't want a child or an old maid. Oh! Balmaine, you poor old fool, what do you know about women, anyhow? You miserable old bachelor! What kind, tendah, womanly hand will evah smooth youah pillow, close youah dying eyes, and wipe the death damp from youah forehead, in the coming certain darkness of the night, when youah spirit shall be called away to the black realms of shade?"

The doctor paused, while a tinge of gloom seemed to gather about his brow, and his lip quivered. "Pshaw! This cigah makes me nervous," and he dashed the half-consumed weed out of the window. "Courage! courage, old fellah! Don't become blue and melancholy. What wah I thinking of? Oh yes! Ivy?—yes! I must make her father see the importance of releasing her from the promise she made to him. There's no telling what day York Hall may be burnt down, and the girl left friendless and homeless. Between Averill's raids on the one side,

and Kilpatrick's on the othah, this part of the country is entirely too lively just now. Let me see how many fights there have been around heah, already, this month? One at Rappahannock Station; one at Waterford; one in King George County; one at Fairfax Court House; one at Rocky Gap; one at"—just here the doctor's soliloquy was interrupted.

"Mass' Doctah, yah hoss ah waitin'!" Balmaine arose, donned his long white duster and broad-brimmed sombrero, mounted his steed, and cantered slowly down town towards the Berryville pike.

It was a terribly sultry day, and the hot sun of August blazed overhead, throwing its angry rays on the scorched and dusty streets.

The stars and bars hung motionless over the City Hall, for not a breath of air was stirring. A large yellow flag was suspended from the Jefferson Tavern, which was converted for the nonce into a hospital, and filled with wounded Confederate soldiers, shipped there from the late battlefield of Gettysburg. Many a gallant fellow was lying in bed, gasping for air, and suffering the tortures of the damned from a mangled and bullet-riddled body. And these sore-wounded men, were they not longing for the mothers, sisters, wives, sweethearts in the far off Southland, who came not? Poor, unfortunate, misguided lads from Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, the Carolinas and Texas. Brave boys, who wept not, who repined not; the deluded knights of an even then, "lost cause." O! memorable month of July,

1863. Lee overwhelmed by the giant North at cruel, cruel Gettysburg; Vicksburg, the key of the Mississippi, surrendered; Morgan's forces captured at Buffington, on the Ohio. Surely that month passed as a dark one in the sad annals of the South.

The doctor sighed as he dashed on down street and out on the pike. "Curse these Northern and Southern statesmen!" he muttered. "This wah is all their doings; to foster and encourage hate between the different sections of the Union; to stir up strife and murder between brothers; to destroy the peace of a once happy people. This has been the mission of your American statesman, hound of hell and servant of the devil that he is," and he drove his spurs into the sides of his unoffending steed and galloped madly on.

Presently the road became narrower and more precipitous, and the doctor checked his horse and walked it slowly up the hill. Higher and higher he climbed, until the basin of the valley could be seen for miles around, and the Shenandoah shone like a belt of liquid silver in the distance, winding and curving at the foot of the far off mountains, where peak towered above peak, crag above crag, clad in their ever-green dress of hemlock, spruce and pine. At the top of the mountain road, which the doctor had now reached, a side road turned abruptly to the right.

This side road led to the residence of Randolph Nelson, York Hall. The doctor rode up to the verandah, in front of the mansion, and there dismounted. A black boy was

in waiting, to receive the animal. "Put the mah up, Sam! Rub her down well, and don't give her any watah. Do you heah, sah?" The boy grinned, and led the animal away. Balmaine's coming having been announced by his voice, the doctor was greeted by a pair of snow-white little hands.

"Oh! doctor, I'm so glad you have come. . Papa is much worse. We thought he was dying this morning."

Balmaine walked into the house, still holding the girl's hand. "Ivy!" he said gently, "you are prepared for the worst? You remembah what I told you last month?"

The soft brown eyes drooped; the little hand within the doctor's, trembled, and a tear-drop glistened as it fell on Balmaine's sleeve; the red lips quivered for a moment, and then a settled expression of firmness came to the sweet mouth. "I am," was all she replied.

Doctor Balmaine entered his patient's room alone. He was at once struck by the great change that had come over Nelson since the day before. As the doctor closed the door softly behind him, Nelson half turned his head on his pillow, while his great luminous eyes beamed with a kindly expression of welcome. His face was thin, care-worn, and haggard; and, as he extended his emaciated hand, he said in a feeble voice: "Sit down, Doctor, I'm glad to see you. I thought this morning it was all over with Randolph Nelson. I am ready and willing to die, however. My affairs are all arranged, and there's nothing more to do, but to abide my appointed time. I have only one thing to regret. I should have liked

to have lived to see the Rebellion crushed, and the flag of my country waving once more from Maine to Florida. The Union once more, the dear old Union. O Virginia! Virginia! You have broken my heart!" and the old man's eyes filled with tears.

"What of Ivy?" interposed Balmaine, who was shocked to find his patient almost pulseless.

Randolph Nelson's face lit up with a smile. "God will take care of Ivy," was all he said.

The doctor was brought to a full halt by this answer. He bit his lips and looked around at the wall, in a perplexed mood. How could he dare to carry out his plan of a few hours before; how could he ask Nelson to annul the promise forced from Ivy? The old gentleman's answer had completely disarmed Balmaine for the moment. "So he trusts his daughter to Providence, with an implicit faith; that will never do," thought the doctor, "as though Providence would prevent Averill's or Kilpatrick's men from burning York Hall, if they wanted to." The pictures of Washington, Jefferson and Madison, looked vacantly down from the wall on the dying Virginian; the old-fashioned French clock on the mantel, ticked away the precious moments of time; there was a painful pause, then the doctor plucked up courage enough to speak more plainly to the man before him.

"Nelson!" he said, in a low pleading tone, "two yeahs since, you forced youah daughtah to break off an engagement with the man she loved, and then obliged her to promise, that she would nevah again receive

Jacques Flournoy as a suitor. Ivy made you that promise, and when Ivy Nelson makes a promise, she keeps it, sah, even, though all the joy and gladness of her future life be shut out foreverah."

Nelson opened his eyes and raised his hand in token of silence: "Doctor!"—his voice was almost indistinct, it was so feeble—"do you suppose that I have been so unfatherly and unkind, as not to think of my only child's future welfare? Go to the bureau and open the top drawer—there, you will find my will."

Balmaine did as Nelson requested. Then, the old man handed the paper back to the doctor, saying, "read the lines on the last page." The doctor, to his utter astonishment, read as follows:

"I do hereby appoint my friend, Doctor Harris Balmaine, of Greenwich Court House, the sole guardian of my daughter, Ivy Nelson. I also appoint the aforesaid Harris Balmaine, the sole executor of my will, until such a time as he may see fit, in his good judgment, to resign said trust. I also freely annul any promise or promises I may have received from the said Ivy Nelson, and ask her, in return, that she shall follow any advice given her by Doctor Balmaine, in whose honor and integrity, I have the highest confidence.—

"RANDOLPH NELSON."

An exclamation of delight escaped from Balmaine's lips: "I'm glad you have been so just and generous, Nelson!" he cried, as he looked again at his patient. Suddenly, the doctor started, and his cheek blanched.

He leaned over the bed, and looked at the fixed glance of the man lying there; he felt his pulse, and it beat no longer—the heart of Randolph Nelson was silent in death.

So passed away the spirit of the grand old Virginian, without a pain, without a struggle—it left the world as gently as it had entered it. Balmaine closed the half-open eyes of the dead man, then hurried out of the room. He met Miss Nelson in the hall, and silently led her back into the chamber. “It’s ovah,” was all the doctor said, and he left Ivy alone with her dead.

Ivy Nelson did not weep, as most women would have done. She simply went up to the bed, brushed the snow-white hair away from his high forehead, kissed it, and sank on her knees in silent prayer. In the meantime, Balmaine went off to the servants’ quarters, and announced to them the death of their master. The blacks flocked up to the house, crying and wringing their hands, for they all dearly loved the kind old gentleman. On returning to the house, the doctor found that Miss Nelson had retired to her room. Mammy Chloe, an octogenarian negress, who had lived on the place before Nelson was born, had taken charge of the remains. Balmaine hastily penned a note to the orphan girl; he wrote thus:

“DEAR MISS IVY:—I am sorry I can be of no service to you in your suffering. If I were only a woman, now, but, alas! I am only a man, and hardly know how to comfort you. I shall make all the necessary arrangements for your father’s funeral; leave the entire manage-

ment of that to me. Your father has placed his will in my hands, and made me your guardian. He has made a last request, that you shall follow my advice in all things. The promise you made him, two years since, regarding Colonel Flournoy, is annulled. I have only a word of parting advice to give you, to-day, it is this: should Colonel Flournoy and his mother visit you this evening, receive them, as though they had called but yesterday. Your father has forgiven Jacques, why should not you? I will see you early to-morrow morning; until then, I remain, as ever,

“Your friend,

“H. B.”

The doctor folded the paper up, and handed it to Mammy: “Give this to Miss Ivy,” he said, and walked out of the house. “Thah’s comfort in that prescription,” he muttered to himself, as mounting his horse, he galloped off in the direction of Greenwich Court House.

It was after five o’clock when Balmaine reached town. Hastily changing his clothes, he ordered out his other horse, and started, immediately, for Belvoir Castle. Onward he rode, forded the Shenandoah, for, since the burning of the bridge, that was the only way of crossing the stream, and commenced the ascent of the steep mountain side. Reaching the lower terrace, he checked his steed for a momentary rest.

To the west, a scene of surpassing beauty burst upon the doctor’s vision. The sun was slowly sinking behind the Shenandoah Mountains, away off toward distant

Winchester and Romney; sinking like a glittering golden ball beyond the horizon, amidst clouds of purple, crimson and bright scarlet, with edges gilded by the fiery splendor of the day-god's last glorious rays. Overhead the sky was azure, assuming a deeper dye to the eastward, where the shadows of night were coming on, and the stars had already commenced to twinkle. The silvery harvest-moon was just rising, its disk half hidden, over the lofty summits of the Blue Ridge.

The bells of All-Saints tolled out the Angelus, and, as their musical tinklings arose from the valley below, hid in the twilight vapors of evening, Balmaine started up from the reverie, into which he had fallen, and urged his horse forward with a cheerful chirrup. Half an hour later, he reached the castle and walked in on its inmates in his, as usual, unceremonious manner. Entering the drawing-room, he found the entire family assembled there, and, in addition, the Rev. Braxton Lewis. The family all arose and greeted the doctor in a cordial manner; the clergyman merely nodded his head in token of recognition.

"Why, Doctor, what in the world brings you up on the mountain this time in the evening; any person sick in the neighborhood?" queried Aunt Janet.

"No, Madam, I merely called to transact a little business with the colonel—in private," he added, noticing the suspicious glance the rector cast at him.

"Oh! you doctors, you are always full of secrets," said Miss Fairfax, looking up from the chess-table, where

she was sitting. "I never did like the medical profession—always telling their patients disagreeable things. Why, only last spring, Dr. Balmaine told me my heart was seriously affected. What do you think of that, Mr. Lewis?" and she looked at the rector, while a most dangerous and coquettish smile lingered around the corners of her little mouth. The rector said nothing, but he looked a great deal out of his handsome, eloquent dark eyes.

"It was my opinion, at that time, that your heart was affected. Since then, I have come to the conclusion that you do not possess such a vital organ," said Balmaine, dryly. He was thinking of Major Bob Atkins at that moment.

Lillian Fairfax laughed merrily. "You have just found that out, have you, Doctor? There! Check!" she exclaimed. "I've got you this time, Mr. Lewis. So much for your being absent-minded and not attending to the game. What are you thinking about, anyhow?"

Braxton Lewis looked up from the chess-board. "I beg your pardon, Miss Lillian, for my apparent inattention. But, indeed, I was thinking of you all the time; that is, I should say, I was thinking about the game I was playing with you," he answered.

Balmaine looked the rector steadily in the eye: "Open confession is good for the soul," said he; "Miss Fairfax will be apt to checkmate you in every move you undertake, Mr. Lewis." "Aunt Janet stopped her knitting for a moment; something in the tone of the doctor's voice

caused her to look up from her work; she had enough womanly perception to know that Balmaine's words had some hidden meaning, and the anger depicted on the clergyman's face showed that the doctor's Parthian arrow had hit the mark. There was an awkward embarrassment all around, for a short space of time, and then Jacques Flournoy said:

"Suppose we go out on the verandah and take a smoke, Doctor—we might talk over our business there," whereupon the two gentlemen arose and left the room, leaving Aunt Janet to renew her knitting, and Miss Fairfax and the rector to try another game of chess.

Directly, Lillian looked up into the rector's dark eyes, "You don't like the doctor, do you?" said she timidly.

"I don't dislike him," answered the politic clergyman, "but sometimes he's so boorish and ungentlemanly, I become quite vexed with him. I remember the Golden Rule: 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' and I always try to live up to it," and he sighed in a melancholy way. "It's hard, though," he continued, "to feel much friendship for these traitors to our beloved South. You know, Balmaine shot my bosom friend, Colonel Blow at the outbreak of the war, and there are many people now, in Greenwich Court House, who strongly suspect the doctor of having assassinated Blow, last June," and the rector wiped an imaginary tear away from his eye, at the remembrance of his dead friend. Aunt Janet's lip curled with a sneer—her recollection of the Blow family was not a pleasant one; in fact, the old lady hated Mrs. Colonel Blow.

"Bah," she exclaimed, sharply, "Harris Balmaine never assassinated Colonel Blow. That story will do to tell all the miserable old gossips in town. Blow was a sneak and a coward. Why did he not challenge the doctor, after the first trouble they had? Blow had no spirit; he was not a thoroughbred Virginia gentleman; he came from poor white trash stock down in Frederick county. I tell you, Mr. Lewis, blood will tell. Balmaine was born and bred a gentleman, and his family, though poor, had an ancestry. The Balmains are old Virginia stock, sir." The old lady was becoming angry, and the rector saw that she would not hear a word said against her family physician, so pretending to be very intent on his game of chess, he lapsed into perfect silence. At heart, the rector was very uneasy. "What in the world has brought Balmaine here to-night," he thought. "Confound the interloper, anyway; I must manage to get rid of him."

Outside on the verandah, sat Jacques and the doctor. There had been a long pause, and the colonel was impatiently waiting for Balmaine to speak. At last the deliberate physician said:

"I have had a painful experience, to-day, Colonel. A friend of mine, an old-time, steadfast friend, died."

Jacques Flournoy looked earnestly at the speaker. "What can the doctor be driving at," thought he. Balmaine puffed out a cloud of tobacco-smoke, and continued.

"He left an only child, a beautiful girl, alone and

unprotected. It's a sad case, Colonel, for these are wah-times, you know."

"Well, Doctor, I can't see what I can do in the matter," interrupted Flournoy. "Of course, if the girl needs assistance, I can let you have a little money, although times are rather hard just now," and he put his hand in his pocket, for he supposed Balmaine was on an errand of charity. "Who are the people you speak of, Doctor?"

"Randolph Nelson and his daughter Ivy," answered the physician, quickly.

If a thunderbolt had stricken Flournoy, he could not have been more dumb and helpless than he was at that instant. His face turned ashen pale, his eyes were wild, glassy and staring, and he sat in his seat as one paralyzed.

"It's a most delicate mattah with me, sah, to speak to you, regarding youah past acquaintance with Randolph Nelson's family. I know you wah thah friend once; what your present feelings may be, I do not know. It's not pecuniary assistance I need in this case, Colonel; Randolph Nelson left a handsome estate; his daughtah will want for nothing, but—but friends, and—and a home. It will nevah do to leave the child in that large house alone and unprotected."

"She is at the mercy of the rough soldiers of both armies, who are continually fighting and skirmishing around in this region of the country. York Hall may be burnt ovah her head any day, and the girl will be exposed

to insult, now that her good old father is dead and gone. I came to ask your advice about the mattah, Colonel," Here the doctor paused, and waited for Jacques to say something.

Jacques was, as yet, too much overcome to speak, his breast was filled by a thousand conflicting emotions, and he remained silent.

Balmaine saw that the colonel was trembling like an aspen. "He loves the girl yet; thank God for that!" thought the doctor; then, in a low, pleading voice he continued: "You know, Colonel, when a woman is in trouble, she needs the ministrations of her own sex. For many months Randolph Nelson has been very ill, and not a woman in this neighborhood has called at York Hall, to inquiah aftah the old man's health, or offer assistance to poor little Ivy. Night aftah night, the child has waited on her father, and is now, completely broken down and worn out, by her unceasing watching at the sick-bed. Is it right, Colonel, to punish the child for her father's political sentiments?"

"He was a Union man. Is there any crime in that? He loved his Country's flag, and his old friends forsook him, as they will forsake his child. I thought, perhaps, that I might induce youah mother and youahself to take some interest in the child. You know Colonel, I am a bachelor, and have no living relatives, if I had, I should not have called at Belvoir Castle. The fact is, Randolph Nelson has appointed me Ivy's guardian, and I have been thinking what I shall do with my ward. I might

take her to Father Burke's and place her undah the care of old Nora Donnelly, or she might go to the Convent at Emmitsburg and remain thah, until the wah is ovah. It would not be a bad idea if Ivy should become a nun. She would be happy, then, for she has no one to love her."

Colonel Flournoy arose and moved his chair close to Balmaine's side. "No one to love her?" he gasped; "No one to love her! My God, Doctor! I've thought of nothing but that woman, for the last five years; but her father ordered me out of his house, and bade me never to enter it again. Why, Ivy promised him to forget me forever. I'm not to blame for what has happened, no! no!"

"So you love her yet?" asked Balmaine.

"I do!" cried Jacques, his voice trembling with emotion.

"Well," said the doctor, in a tone of delight, "I'm her guardian now, and, if you are really, honestly, truly in love with the girl, I give you full permission to go back to York Hall, on the same footing you stood two yeahs ago, sah, and I promise you she will become youah wife, if you ask her, for she has loved you right along."

Jacques Flournoy sprang to his feet. "You've made me a happy man, Doctor!" he exclaimed joyfully; and he turned and dashed down from the verandah, and out over the moonlit lawn, there to give full sway to his pent up feelings.

Balmaine puffed away at his cigar and looked up at the

moon, whose bright rays fell softly on his face and covered his form in a silvery halo. Shortly afterwards, Aunt Janet walked out on the porch.

"What, all alone?" she said, in a tone of surprise; "why, where's Jacques?"

"Here I am, mother," answered the colonel, who had just returned from his stroll in the cool night-air, feeling much calmer for his walk. "Can I see you for a moment alone?"

Janet Flournoy looked at her son; she was filled with curiosity: "Why, Jacques," she said, "you have been weeping," and leaning on the colonel's arm, she entered the house.

What passed between Flournoy and his mother that night, it is not within our province to relate. Suffice it to say, that shortly afterward they returned. Aunt Janet's face was beaming with joy; she advanced toward Balmaine and extended her hand—

"I thank you for my son's sake," she said; "It's all arranged. Ivy shall come to the castle and live with Lillian and myself, that is, if you will consent as her guardian."

"On what terms?" queried the doctor.

"As my daughter!" answered the old lady, drawing herself up to her full height, in a most stately manner. "Ivy Nelson shall not become a nun. She shall not go to Father Burke's house. The Nelson estate must not be turned over to Rome!"

Balmaine hid his face behind his hand, to conceal the

rising smile; "I thought that would overcome Janet Flournoy's prejudices against Ivy," he thought to himself. Rising from his seat, he said: "Madam, I confide the young woman to youah care. I suppose you will go ovah to York Hall to-morrow?"

"I shall go to-night, sir," answered the old lady, sharply. "Jacques has gone to order the buggy."

Ten minutes later, Doctor Balmaine was on his way homewards, tired out and weary, with the cares of the day. He had played his little game and scored one point, so he was satisfied.

CHAPTER VI.

The Discomfiture of the Conspirators.

It was on the 10th of September, 1863, about 10 o'clock at night, that Doctor Harris Balmaine was awakened by the loud ringing of the door-bell of his office. Supposing it was a sick call, the doctor hastily donned his clothes, and went down stairs. As he opened the door of his residence, a squad of six men pushed their way into the room. These men were clad in Confederate uniform, and were commanded by a lieutenant.

"This is Doctah Harris Balmaine?" inquired the officer.

"I have the honah to be the man," answered the physician.

"Well, Doc, I'm mighty sorry to have to arrest you."

"Arrest me! What do you mean, sah?" and Balmaine assumed a most indignant look. "Why, sah, you must be mistaken!"

The officer laughed good-humoredly: "Well, you ah a cool un," he said, "I reckon that we uns hain't made no mistake. Thah ah ony one Doc Balmaine in Greenwich Court House. Heah's the ordah, Doc—this yah will satisfy you, I reckon."

He handed Balmaine a paper, which the doctor took to the light and examined. Sure enough, it was an order for his arrest, but instead of retaining the official order and serving a duplicate, the original document was before him. The paper read as follows:

RICHMOND, *September 7, 1863.*

"TO THE CONFEDERATE COMMANDANT OF GREENWICH COURT HOUSE—

"COLONEL:—You are herewith ordered to arrest one Harris Balmaine, a practicing physician, and resident of Clark county. The prisoner will be at once turned over to General Mosby, at King George's Court House, where a drum-head Court-martial is now convened. Make the arrest on the following charges and specifications:

"1st. *Murder.* That the said Harris Balmaine did, in the month of June, 1863, kill, or cause to be killed, one Caxton Blow, a Southern loyalist, of Clark county.

"2d. *Arson.* That the said Harris Balmaine did, in the month of June, 1863, burn, or cause to be burned, a

bridge across the Shenandoah river, at Greenwich Court House, in Clark county.

"3d. *Treason*. That the said Harris Balmaine did, in the month of June, 1863, furnish information to the Federal commandant of Greenwich Court House of the Confederate General Hampton's advance; thereby, allowing the Federal forces to escape capture.

"These charges have been made and entered at these head-quarters by Braxton Lewis and Crœsus Hites, loyal residents of Greenwich Court House, whose sworn depositions are now on file in the Confederate War Department. The evidence will be taken by the prosecution and properly used.

By order of the Secretary of War, C. S. A.,
Per Major EUSTIS LETCHER.

Balmaine broke out in a cold perspiration. "So Hites and Lewis have determined to put me out of the way," he thought. "Circumstantial evidence will be strong against me—Alone—without friends, what chance will I have with Mosby's gang? They will send me over to St. Marys county, Maryland, and some bright sunny morning, a body will float down the Potomac, toward Chesapeake Bay, a cord around its neck. To be strangled by Mosby's gang!" Balmaine shuddered. "If they would only try me here, at home, I might stand some chance; but with Mosby's thugs—my case is a hopeless one." Then came the desperate thought, "I must and shall escape, cost what it may! I wonder if I

could bribe these men?" and the doctor looked at the squad. They were evidently not wicked men.

"Colonel," said he, addressing the officer in command, who looked highly pleased at the high-sounding title given him by the doctor, "can you give me twenty minutes to gathah my papahs togethah and write a note? Of course I'll not leave the room, and will remain undah your vigilant eye all the time, sah."

The officer looked undecided for a moment, then he said: "We uns are mighty gone for sleep. If you could give we uns suthin' strong now, a leetle whiskey, or some seegahs, we uns might stand it. Eh, boys?" he looked at the squad, who nodded assent.

Like a flash, an idea entered Balmaine's head. In his cupboard, where he kept his medicines, there was a half decanter of fine old Bourbon whiskey. "I'll drug their liquor," thought the doctor. No sooner said, than done. Balmaine opened the cupboard and took out a handful of cigars, which he threw on the table: "Heah's youah smokahs boys," he carelessly said, "light 'em up." Then, while the men were gathered around the table, Balmaine took down the decanter from the shelf, and quietly poured into it the contents of a two ounce vial of chloroform. Shaking the whiskey well, he placed it on the table beside the empty tumblers, with the remark: "Thah's bug-juice for you, boys. It's the strongest whiskey in Clark County." The thirsty troopers finished the liquor in short order, then ranging themselves around the room, commenced puffing away at their stogies.

Balmaine took a seat at the table and slowly scribbled a note. "In fifteen minutes, they will all be dead drunk, and I can escape," thought the doctor, "then I will pull the stable-bell twice, and Galen will have the roan mare at the front door, in less than no time—once on her back, I'd like to see any man in this part of the country catch me." One of the notes Balmaine had finished, read as follows :

"TO LIEUTENANT BLADSEN—

"DEAR SIR :—Many thanks for your vigilance. The whiskey was *very strong*. I would have waked you up and bidden you good-by, before I left, but you complained of feeling sleepy. Present my kind regards to your commander, and tell him I must decline visiting General Mosby, at present. Adieu, "Colonel," and never forget,

Your friend,

"HARRIS BALMAINE."

"P. S.—Call at Chambersburg, Penn., next time."

The doctor looked up from the table—one of the guards was singing loudly, the others looked decidedly drowsy. The officer commanding the squad cast a sleepy glance at the clock over the mantel—"Ony ten-en min-min-its mo-moah," he said, in a dreamy dazed way—"Ten min-min-its mo-moah, Doc." Balmaine resumed his writing, and addressed a note to Cræsus Hites :

"TO THE CONFEDERATE BANKER, BLOCKADE RUNNER,
AND SPY—

"CRÆSUS HITES, ESQ. :—The kind attention of your-

self and friend, Rev. Braxton Lewis, will ever be remembered. The official copy of the order for my arrest, I shall keep as a curiosity and as a memento of your undying love for me. Some time, in the not very far off future, I shall try and reciprocate your kindness. I give you and your friend, fair warning, that I shall shoot on sight. After I dissect your remains, I shall articulate your bones and hang them up in my office; that is, if the Federals do not hang you skin, bones and all, before my return. I won't forget either you or Braxton Lewis, you may depend on that. In the meantime, believe me to be,

Yours,

“HARRIS BALMAINE.”

The doctor had just finished this note, when he was startled by a heavy fall. The lieutenant had tumbled from his chair, and lay snoring on the floor; all the guards were fast asleep. Balmaine pulled the stable bell twice, then he put on a light over-coat, gathered his valuable papers together, and walked out of the front door: “Good-by, old office,” he said, with a sigh, “good-by, once happy bachelor home, I may nevah see you again.”

The negro boy, Galen, was holding the roan mare in waiting at the horse-block.

“Would you like to go North with me, Galen, and live among the Yankees, for a while?” asked the doctor.

“Foah God I would, Mass’ Balmaine,” answered the delighted darkey.

“Well, saddle the othah horse, and follow me out on

the Berryville Pike, as quickly as possible. If you miss me, strike straight for the Chambersburg road—you know the way." And then Balmaine spurred up his horse and galloped off into the darkness. Long before morning, he and his black servant, were in Berkeley county.

On the noon following Balmaine's escape, the Rev. Braxton Lewis walked into Hites' bank. He heard the the excited voice of the banker saying :

"I'd let 'em die, the cursed fools! I'd let 'em die—what did they call in the surgeons foah? Lieutenant Bladsen should be shot. To think of Balmaine's escaping—with that official papah, too. I'm a ruined man, sah—a ruined man!" and Hites paced up and down behind the counter, wringing his hands.

An officer, clad in the full uniform of a Confederate Colonel, was standing near him, in whom Braxton Lewis recognized the Confederate commandant of Greenwich Court House.

"It can't be helped now, Hites," said the officer, "the doctor will be safely in Pennsylvania by to-night, and we can hardly follow him there."

"Why, Colonel Garland, what's the trouble?" asked the rector.

The colonel looked at the clergyman for an instant : "Ask Hites," was his laconic reply, and, turning on his heel, he left the bank. The banker was still pacing up and down his office like a caged lion.

"So you have come to torment me?" he exclaimed,

glaring savagely at Braxton Lewis, "but you ah in for it too," he added, bitterly. "Thah; read that, handing the rector the note left by Balmaine. Lewis started, and paled; something very much like an oath escaped his lips:

"So the tiger's loose again," he said, angrily, striking the counter with his clenched fist; then, he sank back in a chair, covering his face with his hands: "Lost! lost! the game is all lost," he moaned. A sneer of disgust crossed the banker's face:

"It's all youah fault sah. The devil of a pickle you've made of it. Why, you've ruined all our plans, Lewis. Why would you insist on putting the doctah out of the way? and this is the result of it. We ah both trapped, sah—we ah, by Gawd, sah!"

The rector looked up, and glared fiercely at the banker: "Enough of your abuse, Croesus Hites!" he cried, "I've stood too much of it already. It's not my plans that are at fault, but your own stupid concoctions. It was your proposition led me to induce Miss Fairfax to copy treasonable documents; and you expected to have the Fairfax estates confiscated, and Colonel Flournoy shot as a spy. Bah! a pretty way your plans turn out. Why, the girl just commenced to copy the first letter, when in steps Doctor Balmaine, tells the girl I am a villain, and walks off with all our documents. That's what troubles me. I see you can appreciate my feelings now."

At that moment the banker's face was the very picture of horror and despair: "Curse him! curse her! curse you!" he shouted, and turned madly on the rector.

"Give me back my papahs!" and he seized Lewis by the throat.

The clergyman hurled him violently into a chair, where the old man lay breathless and exhausted from excitement. "You try violence again, Hites, and I'll kill you," hissed the rector, panting from the short struggle.

"Trapped! trapped!" groaned the banker, burying his face in his hands, and rocking his body backward and forward in his agitation.

It was just at this juncture that the front door of the bank swung open, and a gentleman walked hurriedly forward; this was none other than Jacques Flournoy. He stepped up to the counter and hesitated for a moment, then he said, addressing Croesus Hites:

"Have you the cash for that last draft yet?"

The banker roused himself up to answer the colonel's query, while the rector breathed more easily, and listened to the conversation of the two men.

"It takes about three weeks to receive our return mails from Baltimore," said Hites to Flournoy; "I'll send you the money in Confederate scrip or Yankee greenbacks—just as you like."

"Well, I'll take greenbacks," answered the colonel. "We won't be able to use scrip, in a day or two. I suppose you've heard the latest news? No? Why, Pleasanton's advancing up the Berryville pike in force. The Yankees will have the town before sunset. Colonel Garland, whom I just left, is getting ready to fall back, in fact, he's going to clear out from the county altogether."

The rector and banker were too much overpowered by the startling news to speak; they were filled with terror and dismay.

Flournoy looked at the two men in amazement: "What are you afraid of?" he asked.

Hites and Lewis only answered his query with a mute look of agony, so Jacques turned and left the office.

Out on the main street, all was noise and bustle. Heavily loaded wagons were moving toward the Shenandoah, with the swearing teamsters and obstinate mules. Orderlies were dashing here and there, carrying messages from point to point. Jacques Flournoy rode over to the Confederate head-quarters, where Colonel Garland was sitting on the lower porch, overlooking the street.

"Hallo! Flaw-noy, I'm going to leave you," shouted the cheery officer; "the Yanks will take tea in town to-night. My regards to all the ladies at Belvoir. Tell them we won't see them befoah Spring again—maybe nevah. If you evah happen to be in the neighborhood of Macon, Georgia, call in and see me, Colonel. Good-by! good-by!" and the handsome Southerner waved his sombrero in token of farewell, while Flournoy started off, sad-hearted, homeward.

In the meantime, a quarrel had occurred at the bank between Hites and Lewis. Just after the departure of Colonel Flournoy, these worthies calmed off sufficiently to use their tongues. The rector remarked, in a sarcastic way:

"I suppose you won't go up to the castle next Wednesday night, to the wedding?"

"What wedding," growled Hites.

"Why, Jacques Flournoy and Ivy Nelson are to be married. Is it possible that you have not heard the news?" and Braxton Lewis smiled maliciously.

The banker gazed savagely at the rector, from his blood-shot eyes. "You lie, you scoundrel, you lie!" he cried, jumping to his feet.

"Yes, your sweetheart's going to marry the colonel," continued the rector, "and I've not been asked to officiate at the ceremony. You are not as lucky as I am, Hites, for I flatter myself that Braxton Lewis has made sad inroads on Miss Lillian's affections. I'm quite convinced that the young lady is desperately in love with me. Now, Hites, let's play quits; you have plenty of money stored away in Canada; suppose you just leave the country and save your hide. I can go South for a while, until this Balmaine affair blows over. Afterwards I can return and marry the heiress; no danger now from the Yankee major, I assure you," and the rector twisted his long, drooping moustache, while a pleased expression flitted across his really handsome face.

A happy thought had struck Braxton Lewis. Balmaine had none of his papers; the documents, handed by the rector to Miss Lillian, were all in the hand-writing of Cræsus Hites. As for Balmaine calling him a villain, Lewis felt confident that the eloquent and lying tongue of a lover would convince the girl that the doctor was wrong, and that he, a clergyman of a church, could not be guilty of such perfidy. "I will save myself," thought

the rector, "and let Crœsus Hites paddle his own canoe."
"Yes, I expect to marry Miss Fairfax at an early day, and I'll invite you up to the castle, that is, providing," and he cast a sardonic look at the banker, "that you are *living* in this neighborhood."

"Ah you in earnest, Braxey?" queried the banker, his eyes snapping with hatred and anger. "Have you quite forgotten our contract?"

The rector started a little, but replied calmly, "I consider the contract broken, Hites."

"You do?" yelled the enraged banker, with an oath. "Well, I don't. I'll make you crawl and cringe at my knees yet, Rev. Mr. Hypocrite. You rat! to desert a sinking ship. But you shall go down with me! You shall! By Gawd, sah!" and he shook his clenched fist in the air. "I have the contract written and signed by youahself. I shall place that valuable bit of papah in Colonel Flournoy's hand. Then we shall see who can stand things best, the Rev. Braxton Lewis or Crœsus Hites. Don't try to bluff me, sah! I hold four aces, I do; by Gawd, sah!"

The rector trembled with rage and agitation, for he saw that the banker had him in his power. "You won't do that. You wont do that!" he gasped. Forgive me, Hites, I have been too hasty. I'll beg your pardon on my knees, I'll do anything you ask me, only, don't ruin me!"

"Crœsus Hites' face wore a hard, relentless expression at that instant. "I've lost faith in you, Braxey Lewis,"

he said, coldly. "I can't trust you any moah," and he cast a withering look of contempt at the rector.

Braxton Lewis was in a dilemma. Supposing Hites should show their mutual contract to Jacques. What would Lillian think? Did the woman love him enough to forgive his fearful duplicity? Could he throw himself on her generosity, and rely on her love for forgiveness? The rector had a strong misgiving that this might not do. "No! no!" he thought. "I must conciliate Hites for a few hours, until I can either induce the girl to elope with me, or abduct her, and force her to marry me. Once married to her, I can hold this miserable old scoundrel level." Raising his down cast-eyes, the rector said, in a pleading, humble way.

"Dont destroy my happiness, Hites! I see I am in your power. What can I give you as a guarantee of my further good conduct? Forgive me old friend and benefactor. Forgive me!" and he extended his hand.

"Now, while the rector had been cogitating on ways and means of escape, the banker had been occupied in a like manner.

"I can't trust this man," thought Hites; "he has already betrayed me. What a fool I was to let him have those papers in my handwriting. I loved Ivy Nelson and hoped to marry her, now that her father is dead and out of the way. It's a question of life with me—I love my life and my wealth better than any woman. I must give up either Ivy, or life and property. If I abduct the girl, I should be hunted down by Balmaine and Jacques

Flournoy. Ivy must be left alone. Could I possibly conciliate Flournoy, Balmaine, and Major Atkins, I would come out of this scrape all right.

"Lewis is in my power now, and I can force him to give me his copy of the contract; then, I can go to the colonel and warn him of the rector's intentions—first, however, destroying both copies of the contract. If they inquire why Miss Lillian was asked to copy the treasonable documents, I can declare, truly that it was not my doings, and that the papers were purloined from me by the rector. Then, Balmaine is Ivy's guardian. I can make her a handsome wedding present—for instance, the farm land adjoining York Hall. That would please Balmaine and Flournoy, and make them think better of me. Atkins is the rector's rival; I can place papers in the Yankee Major's hand, which he can use to advantage against Lewis. So, I'll have Yankee and Confederate protection, too."

He had cogitated up to this point, when Lewis had extended his hand. It was at this juncture that the banker drew himself back, with an air of resentment and dignity.

"I decline youah hand, Lewis," he said, "we can be friends no longah, unless—unless I have some positive proof of youah confidence in me. Give me youah copy of the contract, and I may reconsidah my determination."

The rector hesitated. "I'm in your power now," he replied, "what possible good can the contract do you?"

"You refuse, then?" demanded the banker, while a darkening scowl o'erspread his face. "Very well, sah."

"No! no!" cried Braxton Lewis, "You shall have it; here it is." He fumbled in his coat-pocket, and then in his breast pocket; then he started, as if struck by a sudden recollection. "Fool! Fool! that I am," he cried. "I am ruined; the contract was in among the papers I handed to Miss Fairfax. I forgot to take it out, and that cursed Balmaine has it." Seizing his hat, he strode out of the room, leaving the thunderstruck banker standing in bewilderment, back of the counter.

"Stop! you confounded scoundrel!" presently yelled the banker, grinding his teeth with rage. "Stop, I say," but it was too late, the rector of All-Innocents had gone.

"Trapped! Caught in our own trap," muttered Crœsus Hites, and sank back, helpless, in his chair.

On leaving the bank, Braxton Lewis had determined to play a most desperate game. This was nothing else than to go up to Castle Belvoir, make a clean breast of the whole transaction, plead his own cause, urge an immediate marriage and a wedding-journey South. "Once out of Hite's clutches, I'll be a better man," he murmured. Looking at his watch, he found it was almost two o'clock. Then the rector mounted his horse, and dashed off madly towards the Fairfax place.

Now, while these events were transpiring that morning in town, events of an equally exciting character had occurred at the castle. At the hour of half-past nine on that eventful morning, Rev. Patrick Burke might have been seen climbing the steep mountain road, on foot. He was covered with dust, and perspiring freely. Every

once in a while he would halt for a breathing-spell, and wipe his poor old bald head with a huge yellow bandanna handkerchief; then, panting and puffing, he would again climb on. The pastor of All Saints was bound on an important mission; he was going to call on Miss Ivy Nelson, who was stopping at the castle.

His trip to the Fairfax mansion, was induced by the following circumstance. It seems that Nora Donnelly, while scrubbing the priest's front steps, early that morning, had been startled by the passing by of a number of soldiers, carried on litters. Nora, inquired of an intelligent contraband, who happened to be standing near, what was the matter.

"Nuffin' much," came the answer to her query; "Dem dah sogers, done gone and kill Doctah Balmaine, but de doctah shot 'bout forty of dem, foah dey fotched him."

"The horror stricken Nora, on the reception of this very reliable news, rushed wildly into the chapel where Father Burke had just finished mass.

"Howly Mary! your riverence, and hev yez heered the news," she cried, "thim Ribs hez gone and kilt Dochter Balmaney, intirely. Oh! wirra, wirra! who will be after curin' me chills again'?" and the honest-hearted Irish woman wept bitterly.

Father Burke was so shocked at this news, that he reeled up against the altar for support. He did not doubt Nora's story. It never once occurred to him to question the woman. He had long expected to hear of

Balmaine's sudden taking off, and at last it had come. The priest fell upon his knees and poured out his feelings in a silent prayer for the doctor's soul. When he arose there were tears in his eyes, but he was much calmer. He left the church, went to his bed-room, opened his closet and took therefrom, a package of papers.

"I shall keep my promise, dear, departed friend," he murmured sadly, "and all the papers you bade me to carry to Miss Nelson, I shall take to her. Sure, he said to me last night: 'Burke,' says he—God rest his soul! he never would call me by any other name, for he had a dale of the Protestant in him—'Burke,' says he, 'if I should happen to be killed or to disappear suddenly, take all these papers up to Belvoir Castle, and hand them to Miss Ivy Nelson. Tell her to show Colonel Flournoy all of them; in particular, the letter of Braxton Lewis to Colonel Blow, and the contract made by Cræsus Hites and Lewis. It will knock Miss Lillian's love affair with the rector, higher than a kite. It will enable us to get even with all these scoundrels.'

"Sure the docther was a quare man, but a good-hearted one. So I'm going to keep my promise to him, even if I do have to face the old woman up at the castle, and I'd as leave meet the devil, himself, anytime;" so soliloquizing, the good old priest put on his well-worn hat, and started off on his long and wearisome walk.

In his younger days, Father Burke had been an excellent pedestrian, but now, he had grown so old and heavy, every step he took cost him an effort. His last promise

to his dear friend, the doctor, buoyed him up; besides, he had enough of human nature in him, priest though he was, to be delighted at the prospect of damaging his old-time enemy, the rector of All-Innocents. So he started off, quite briskly, only to feel footsore, however, in less than an hour's time.

By-and-by, he reached the Fairfax place, and walked up the lane, toward the house; when within twenty feet of the verandah, he stumbled on Madam Flournoy. The old lady was leaning over a flower-bed, engaged in potting some choice plants.

Aunt Janet was startled by the sudden apparition of the priest. Drawing herself into an erect position, she pulled off her gingham sun-bonnet, and assumed the poise of a French field-marshal. Her eyes flashed angrily, as she looked askance at Father Burke, and waited, in stern silence, for the priest to open hostilities.

The pastor of "All-Saints" took off his hat, and stood uncovered in the august presence of Aunt Janet; he made a courtly obeisance, and advanced his skirmish line, then fired the first verbal shot.

"Madam, it's a beautiful September morning, is it not? You are busy I see, removing the sensitive plants out of the reach of the cold blasts of the coming winter?"

"They are not sensitive plants, sir. They are Calladiums," answered the old lady, in a quick snappish way.

The priest was repulsed for a second or two, then he again ventured to advance. "But madam, you misunderstand my meaning. When I said sensitive plants, I intended to imply that they were not hardy plants."

"Ah! Indeed!" said Aunt Janet, sneeringly. "Well, you should say what you mean, and not leave a person to draw inferences, but that's the way you crafty Jesuits have of doing."

"Father Burke bit his lip. "It's idle to waste words with you, mem. I came to the castle this morning on business. I wish to see Miss Nelson for a few moments."

A dangerous light beamed in Aunt Janet's eyes. "I see! I see! she cried. "You wish to place Ivy in a convent. You wish to convert her to your abominable faith; to make her fall down and worship brazen images, and wax Virgins, but you can't do it, sir! You can't do it! I know the tricks of your craft too well. I have no doubt you would like to have York Hall turned into a nunnery, and give Pope Pius the title to the same," and she shook her fingers and nodded her snowy head, in a most knowing manner. "Yes! I'm up to your tricks. Don't smile at me, sir! Janet Flournoy is able to take care of herself. Not that I care to encounter your Jesuitical ill-will. God knows what night you may repeat St. Bartholomew's massacre on Virginia soil. I tell you, sir, all my Huguenot blood boils within me, when I see such men as you allowed to practice the vile teachings of Rome, in this land of religious liberty. Don't look at me that way! I'm not afraid of you, but I see by your looks that I'm to be put down in the "bloody book" of your order. The day may yet come, when Janet Flournoy, will be killed, or burnt at the stake, as were her Huguenot ancestors. But, I was born a Protestant, I live a

Protestant, I shall die a Protestant, in spite of Papal Bulls, or Romish anathemas," and the old lady gesticulated wildly, and tossed her gray head from side to side.

Father Burke was astonished, at first, at this outbreak of passion on Aunt Janet's part; then his feeling of surprise gave way for one of amusement. There was a smile on his face, and a roguish twinkle in his eye, when the old lady finished her harangue.

"Sure, Madam, you wrong me entirely," he said "it's not married women we want in nunneries. Sure Miss Nelson is to become Mrs. Flournoy, next week, and, if she is half as staunch a Protestant as her to-be-mother-in-law, faith! I think St. Peter, himself, who holds the blessed keys to Paradise, would not make a Catholic of her." He laughed merrily, and Aunt Janet was somewhat mollified by his semi-flattering speech.

"So you are not going to try and convert her?" said the old lady.

"I should not attempt such a thing, Madam, at least, while such a strong Protestant missionary as yourself was around. My faith is my faith, let Miss Nelson's be what it may. I came to this place on very important business. I have a letter for Miss Nelson, from the late Dochter Balmaine."

"Why! what do you mean, Mr. Burke?" quoth Aunt Janet, who trembled, and commenced to turn pale.

"Sure the dochter is dead," said the priest, "killed entirely, last night, by assassins."

Janet Flournoy's head became dizzy, she staggered and

would have fallen, had not the priest gently extended his arm and caught her.

Miss Nelson and Lillian Fairfax, who had been amused spectators of the meeting between Father Burke and Madam Flournoy, now ran out of the house to see what in the world ailed the dear old lady. Together, with the priest's aid, they assisted Aunt Janet into the house, where she recovered from her faintness sufficiently to go to her own room, in company with Lillian.

In the meantime Ivy Nelson went in search of a glass of cold water for the tired and thirsty priest. When Father Burke had quenched his thirst, he looked up at Ivy and said :

"Thank you, my child! Then pausing an instant, he added, softly. "So you are to be married next week? Well, may God bless you, and make you happy with the man of your choice."

Ivy blushed. "Thank you, ever so much, for your good wishes," she replied. "I do hope you will learn to like Jacques. He's such a brave, noble man.

No better than you deserve, my dear," and the kindly blue eyes of the priest beamed benevolently on the young woman. "But, Miss Ivy," and a shadow crossed his face and his lip quivered, "I have bad news for you this morning; Docther Balmaine is dead."

To his utter amazement, Miss Nelson indulged in a laugh. "You are mistaken, Father Burke; I have just received a note from the doctor; one of the servants at York Hall brought it over but a few minutes since. I

was just going to show it to Mrs. Flournoy, when you came up the lawn. Then she read to the priest the following note :

"Passing York Hall, (midnight). I have just escaped my enemies, and am on my way to Pennsylvania. Father Burke will call on you. "H. B."

Father Burke, clapped his hands for joy. "Tell Madam Flournoy the news at once," he exclaimed. "Good-by! Good-by!" and he rushed out of the house.

CHAPTER VII.

The Rev. Braxton Lewis Makes His Parting Bow.

Lillian Fairfax and Ivy Nelson stood at the drawing-room window, watching the disappearing form of Colonel Flournoy, who was riding down the road on his way to town. With arms entwined around each others waists they lingered there; the golden haired, blue-eyed maiden; the dark haired, brown-eyed girl.

"Do you love him ever so much, dear?" The person addressed dropped her eyes before the steady gaze of her fair interlocutor.

"What a queer question for you to ask, Lillian," she replied, as a slight flush o'erspread her cheek; "of course I love Jacques, or why should I expect to marry him?"

Why, did you ever dream I did not love him?" Miss Fairfax was silent, and still kept looking down the road, in an absent-minded sort of way. Miss Nelson moved away from the window and took a seat on the sofa. "Why, Lillian?" Ivy repeated her question. Lillian left the window, and threw herself down on the sofa beside the speaker.

"I hardly know why I asked the question," said Miss Fairfax, "but women are so funny; I don't think they know half the time whether they are in love or not. Do you know, Ivy, that the older I grow the less I know my own mind? I'm in love sometimes, then not in love; at least, I have the feeling you call love. Oh! dear! dear! Please tell me how you feel, Ivy? Tell me what the true symptoms of the affection are?" She put her arm around Miss Nelson's waist and kissed her. An amused expression flitted across Ivy's face. "What a child you are," she said. "After all the sweethearts you have had, Lillian, I should think you ought to know what it is to love."

"I don't though," answered her ladyship, poutingly. "Sometimes I think I love a man, when along comes some other fellow whom I like better. Number two is no sooner out of sight, than I admire number three, and so on, through the list. I tell you, Ivy, I don't think I have any heart." She dropped her head in Miss Nelson's lap, as she spoke. Ivy patted and fondled the golden hair, and leaning over, kissed Lillian's cheek.

"If that is the case, darling," she said, "you have

never been in love. When a woman is once in love, dear, she very soon finds it out. The symptoms are unmistakable," and the speaker sighed.

"Well, but tell me how it feels?" persisted Lillian pettishly.

Ivy hesitated for a moment. "I don't think I can describe the feeling exactly," she said. "However, it's a feeling that concentrates itself on one man. Waking, you think only of that man; sleeping, you dream only of him. All your pleasures are wrapped up in his pleasures, all your pains in his pains. What he thinks is right you think is right; what he thinks is wrong, you think is wrong. You see with his eyes, hear with his ears, speak with his tongue; in other words you become without knowing it, his exact counterpart. If you are happy while such a state of affairs exists, you are in love. That's the best explanation I can give you of the feeling."

Lillian had raised herself slowly up while Ivy was speaking and was looking at her in wonder; then her blue eyes filled with tears. "O! dear, dear!" she cried, in a tone of vexation. "I thought I was in love, but I never felt that way. I wonder if men ever feel so—they are all such brutes. A woman worries about a man all day. She lies awake at night, wondering what he is doing; she thinks, perhaps he is courting some other woman, and she hates him for it, and then weeps over him the very next minute. She falls into a troubled sleep, and dreams she marries some other man and is utterly miserable. Oh dear! I wish I were a man."

Ivy looked at Lillian and laughed. "Well, Lillian," she remarked, "when a woman feels like that, she certainly has some of the symptoms of love, but it must indeed be an unhappy feeling, when a woman mistrusts her lover's loyalty. I should judge such a case to be one of unreciprocated affection."

Lillian Fairfax assumed an erect attitude: "Don't say that, Ivy, she exclaimed, "you make me feel perfectly unhappy. I'm sure he loves me."

"And has it gone so far in your case?" queried Ivy, softly, but in a chiding tone, "and you have not confided in me, Lillian? However, from what I've seen of the gentleman during my short stay in this house, I certainly think he is very much in love with you."

Lillian indulged in a slightly hysterical laugh: "He's not been in the house, Ivy."

Miss Nelson looked up in a bewildered way: "Why, you mean Rev. Braxton Lewis, don't you?" she asked.

Lillian smiled. "No; it's not he," she replied. "What! I in love with Braxton Lewis—never! All he cares for is my money. He may have humbugged Aunt Janet and you into believing he loved me, but, pshaw! I know better—it's not Lillian, but the Fairfax estate he's after. I have had experience with gentlemen of his kind before."

Miss Nelson opened her eyes wider and wider with amazement. "Can it be possible," she thought, that this spoiled and petted girl has such a true insight into the motives of the men who visit her? Does she really carry

so much wisdom under an assumed mask of childishness and innocence?" Ivy Nelson felt happy at that moment, as any girl feels, when her most intimate female friend assures her that she is not in love with a man detested by the former.

Clarinda dislikes Paul, who is in love with her intimate friend, Arabella. Clarinda sees all Paul's faults, judges all his motives and actions, to which Arabella is, apparently, blind. Clarinda, who is a woman of the world, does not tell Arabella what she thinks. Why? Women know their own sex too well, they know that a woman will drop a life-long female friend, rather than hear anything said against an almost stranger of the opposite sex.

Ivy Nelson was pleased that Lillian was not interested in Braxton Lewis; she was also surprised that Lillian's opinion of the rector should coincide so exactly with her own. Who could this mysterious lover of Lillian's be? Woman-like, Ivy determined to find out.

"Why, Lillian," she said, "you never told me you had a real lover. Just to think, I've been here several weeks, too. What a sly puss you are. Come now, tell me all about it, won't you, dear?" coaxingly, "make me your confidante. If the young man is fickle we will bring him to terms; for what can two women not do, when they start out to capture one man?"

"You will promise to help me," cried Lillian, seizing Ivy's hand, "upon your word of honor—cross yourself? And you will promise to secure Jacques' consent? Oh,

Ivy, if you will only help me, I'll be your sworn friend forever," and her eyes sparkled with delight.

"I'll promise to help you," said Ivy, "any person except Braxton Lewis; I hate him, for he was my father's bitter enemy. But, come now, Lillian, tell me all about it. Who is the happy man? What is his name?"

Lillian blushed, and said: "Well, in the first place, he's a mudsill Yankee; that's what Aunt Janet calls him."

Ivy Nelson pursed her scarlet lips, and gave a long, low whistle: "Oh, Lillian, a Yankee! a Union man? How could you do such a thing? You naughty little Rebel!"

"You fell in love with a Rebel officer," retorted Lillian, sharply.

"That's so—that's so," replied Ivy, in a conciliatory tone. "Go on, pet—go on! Tell me all about this horrid Yankee."

"He's not horrid at all," said Lillian, indignantly, "but awfully nice. He is just as cunning as can be. Such lovely eyes and teeth, and his moustache, it's simply beautiful."

"Is he of good family?" asked Ivy.

"I never inquired about that," said Lillian, musingly, dropping her eyes in a demure manner. "I expect his father is a shop-keeper, and his mother takes in washing or does plain sewing," petulantly. "He's the only Yankee I was ever in love with, and I'll never fall in love with another one as long as I live. He has given me a world of trouble and anxiety, dear."

"Does he love you, Lillian?" queried Ivy.

Lillian hesitated for a moment, then answered, in a doubting way: "I think so, at least he ought to, for he has made me miserable."

"Any man would be a brute who could not fall in love with you," said Ivy, patting the golden hair, as she spoke, "but tell me" she continued, "where does your lover live? What is his name?"

"He is from Toledo, Ohio; and his name is Atkins—Major Robert Atkins. Is it not a pretty name? Oh, Bob!"

"Why! he used to be the Federal commandant of Greenwich Court House. I have heard papa speak of him," said Ivy.

"That's he," exclaimed Lillian, "the very same, identical Bob."

"He used to play divinely on the cornet, did he not?" queried Ivy.

"Ah! yes, indeed," and Miss Fairfax shook her head, and uttered a long drawn sigh: "Yes, that's what caused me to fall in love with him first, I think. You see, Ivy, when I went to Madame Bonbon's school; in New York, this Bob Atkins boarded across the street from us.

"We girls used to sit up at night, listening to his music. How Madame would scold us next day for not remembering our lessons, and for being so sleepy, as though any girl could recollect what was in those horrid books, and think of Bob at the same time! I used to

have awful headaches then, and, many and many a time, I've almost cried my eyes out, because Bob passed the house without looking up at my window. I've prayed and prayed to God to give me Bob for a husband—I know it was wicked, but I was in love, you see."

Ivy Nelson smiled, half in amusement, half in pity, at the earnest manner in which Lillian said this.

"Did Major Atkins ever propose to you, Lillian?" she asked.

"He never had a chance," replied Miss Fairfax, "how could he? I never spoke half a dozen words to the man in my life—But—but—I—I looked love at him."

"What!" exclaimed Ivy, in wonder.

"It's true as gospel," continued Lillian; "why, dear, if I only had him to myself for fifteen minutes, I'd make him propose—I never saw a man, yet, whom I could not make propose if I so desired; the trouble is to keep them from proposing."

"How about Braxton Lewis?" inquired Ivy, mischievously.

Miss Fairfax elevated her pretty little nose in a way, that, while comical in the extreme, would not have been regarded as refined in polite society:

"He!" and her lip curled with scorn. "He! He never dared to propose to me—the idea! No smart woman will allow a man to propose, unless she desires it."

"I'm afraid you have been a very wicked little flirt," said Ivy. "What an amount of suffering you have caused. Think of the hearts you have made miserable! Indeed, indeed—I think your conduct has been very naughty."

Lillian, looked up smilingly; she felt flattered and pleased, for what women is there, who does not desire to be considered a charmer by her own sex?

"You poor, innocent Ivy," she remarked, "you have never had but one lover, your ugly, old Jacques. I've had lots of them. I found out one thing about men, they are all profound egotists; flatter the animals, and you can bring them to their knees. Study their weak points. A man can never stand flattery regarding his weak points, without admiring the flatterer. There was Harry Carroll, who imagined himself cut out for a statesman; he was awfully stupid and conceited. Why, do you know I made him believe he had all the eloquence of Patrick Henry, together with the brilliant mental endowments of Calhoun? Carroll was desperately in love with me; in less than a month he proposed. I told him to call again, when he was President of the United States. Poor fellow! he was killed at 'Bull Run' fight. There was Hunter Spotswood, from Staunton, who imagined he had all the eloquence of Chrysostom. Spotswood came over to hold Lenten services at "All-Innocents." I attended service regularly all that forty days. I put a little vial of hartshorn, (Dr. Balmaine gave it to me), into my pocket, and, during the sermons, I'd take a sniff, now and then, to make me weep. Of course the youth got to keeping his eye on me, during every service; he used to pray at me, preach at me, until some of the congregation noticed it. One day, he came up to the castle, and asked me in a patronizing way, to become Mrs.

Hunter Spotswood. I told him to call again, when he became a Bishop. Whew! you ought to have seen how angry he was.

"I tell you, Ivy, it took all the conceit out of him. That's the way to bring the animals around. If they flatter you, flatter them; if they look love, look love back at them; when they sigh, you sigh. Drop your handkerchief; when they stoop to pick it up, you lean over slightly, and just let your cheek gently graze theirs; they will just up and propose, then, right on the spot. I never knew it to fail. That's one thing Madame Bonbon taught us."

"I should think such conduct extremely indelicate and unladylike," said Ivy, blushing. "I'm sure I never acted that way with Jacques. No woman could win him in such a manner."

Lillian laughed carelessly, but at the same time felt rebuked:

"They coax, sometimes," she said, "sometimes they threaten. Perhaps Jacques was that kind of a lover."

"No, indeed," replied Ivy, tartly, "Jacques neither coaxed nor threatened."

Lillian threw her arms around Ivy's neck. "Of course, *our* Jacques is different from other men," she said. "There are exceptions to all rules. There's my Bob, for instance. But, Ivy, it don't do to trust too much in men; they are full of promises, and they very rarely keep them. You remember how Kate Templeton, of Berryville, reformed Madison Wise? How he used to

attend church with her every Sunday, and go to all the prayer-meetings, and how he finally joined the Temperance Society and the Methodist church, all on Kate's account; how he promised her, if she would marry him, that he would never drink again, and would always be a Christian. She married him. Did he reform? Why, he got drunk at the wedding, and hasn't drawn a sober breath since, and, as for church, he never goes inside one. Don't they break their promises? Look at Josie Ashby, of Front Royal. Did not Stuart Pinkney, of South Carolina, promise her, if she married him, that he would always let old Mrs. Ashby occupy the house she had lived in for fifty years? What did he do after he was married? Why, he went straight to work and sued his mother-in-law for his wife's share of the Ashby estate.

"He'd have turned old Mrs. Ashby out of house and home, but about that time Bush Ashby came home from Kentucky, had a quarrel with his brother-in-law, and shot Pinkney dead. I went to the funeral, and I think Kate was the happiest widow I ever saw. I tell you, Ivy, these men are a horrid set. You can't trust them."

"Except Jacques," quietly remarked Ivy.

"And my Bob," said Lillian, eagerly. "Bob never would break his promise, I know; though he never made me any," she added mournfully.

Then the two young girls kissed each other again. Such is the bond of sympathy and trust created by that wicked little imp Cupid, who stalks around the world, his

infantine proportions not even hidden by short clothes, shooting his cruel arrows into the tender hearts of youth and maiden; creating wounds, which are often, too often, alas! healed only by some eminent lawyer, and an Indiana or Illinois divorce court.

"Oh! who is that coming up the lawn?" exclaimed Lillian. Well, as I live, if it's not that priest from the village. I wonder what in the world he wants?"

"He is probably coming to call on me," answered Ivy.

"He had better look out for Aunt Janet," remarked Lillian. "Look! look, quick, Ivy, he almost stumbled over her. Now they will have it," and she clapped her hands together, gleefully.

"I wonder what they are talking about?" said Ivy.

Suddenly they noticed that Aunt Janet seemed to grow faint, and that Father Burke was leading the old lady toward the house.

"Oh, dear! Aunty is sick," cried Lillian, "let's run to her and see what's the matter," and both young women went to the assistance of Madam Flournoy, the full particulars of which incident were mentioned in the previous chapter.

After Aunt Janet had been put to bed, and quieted by the assurance that Doctor Balmaine was not dead; and after the departure of the kind old priest, Lillian descended to the drawing-room once more, where she found Miss Nelson in a deep meditation over a bundle of papers.

Lillian looked curiously at Ivy for a moment; then she

said: "Why, those are the very papers Doctor Balmaine took away from me, the other day, before I had a chance to look over them. Let me see, is that the one Braxton Lewis asked me to copy?"

"Hardly," answered Ivy. "He must have made a mistake, when he left this document among these papers. I knew Lewis was a bad man, but I never dreamed, for a moment, that he was such a scoundrel," an expression of utter contempt appeared on her face, as she spoke.

"Why, what is it? Give it to me!" demanded Lillian, imperiously.

Ivy Nelson hesitated for a moment. Should she let Lillian, see the damning proof of the rector's villainy? An hour before this time, she would have, absolutely, refused Miss Fairfax's request; she would have left to Jacques the painful duty of exposing the hypocrisy of Braxton Lewis. But now it was different; for had not Lillian confessed to her that her affections had been altogether bestowed on the Yankee major?

"I can settle the matter," thought Miss Nelson, and, thereupon, she handed the heiress the contract, drawn up and signed by Braxton Lewis and Croesus Hites.

Lillian Fairfax read the document over carefully, and grew paler and paler as she scanned it. When she had finished she crumpled the paper in her hand, and burst into tears.

That Lewis was a fortune-hunter she knew, but that he was capable of being such a scoundrel as he had shown himself to be, quite shocked the young lady. The abso-

lute lack of respect shown for her, as evidenced by the contract, wounded Lillian's pride most deeply; and she wept for mortification and shame, feelings which presently gave way for those of indignation and rage. So he wished to rob her of her inheritance and good fame? Wished and plotted to drag the proud old Virginian name of Fairfax to the dust, to spit upon it, to spurn it, to hold it up to ridicule and slander!

Her ladyship's blood fairly boiled within her, heated by the fever of anger and fury. She could have tolerated the rector's hatred, for she fully anticipated that, when the time for rejecting him should have come. She could tolerate the idea that he was seeking her hand for her fortune, for she had gauged his intentions long before. Fault, not to be forgiven, the rector had not given her the poor chance for revenge desired by most women—the chance to *refuse* him. It was natural that she should feel piqued after her vain boasts made to Ivy not an hour before.

So Lewis wanted to place her in the position of a spy?

Who would condemn her? Who sit in judgment on her case? Why, the very man whose love and respect was more to her than all the wealth of the Fairfax estate—the man she worshiped and adored—Major Robert Atkins. What would the Federal commandant have thought, if the plot had succeeded? He might have forgiven her, to be sure, but would his respect for her not have been diminished? What woman is there who does not desire the esteem of a lover?

Braxton Lewis would have robbed her of that. Miss Fairfax shuddered as she thought over the narrow escape she had made. She grew hot and cold by turns, and her head swam around and around. At last, by a powerful effort, she checked her bitter tears, and said, "Thank God for this narrow escape! Foolish! Foolish girl that I have been. If it had not been for Balmaine, what would have become of me?"

"And my Jacques would have been hung as a spy," exclaimed Ivy. "What would I have done, when such a villain as Croesus Hites was plotting my destruction? Why, papa kicked him out of the house once, for proposing to me. Hites' wife had only been dead six weeks. Think of it, Lillian!"

While the two young women were talking together, Colonel Flournoy entered. Seeing their tearful eyes, Jacques came to a stand-still in the middle of the room. "Have they been quarreling?" he thought. Walking across the floor, to where Ivy was sitting, he placed his hand upon her head. "What! In tears?" he said, chidingly.

The ladies jumped to their feet, and threw their arms about him; they pulled him down on the sofa, and in disjointed sentences and amid many sobs, told him the story of the rector's perfidy, and showed him the Hites contract. To say Colonel Flournoy was angry would be but to feebly express his feelings; he paced up and down the room for some time, in an excited way; then he sternly said, "Braxton Lewis must die."

"That's right, kill him, Jacques!" cried Lillian, her eyes flashing angrily. "Shoot him down like a dog, on sight."

Ivy Nelson was shocked, although born and bred in that section of the country where a harsh word, or an insult, was always resented by a blow, and an "affah of honah" afterwards. She had inherited all her father's prejudices against duelling. She looked at Lillian, she looked at Jacques. "You cannot mean what you say," she exclaimed. "What, Lillian! You! a woman, urging your kinsman to murder a fellow-being; asking the man who is to be my husband to stain his hands with blood! For shame! For shame!" drawing her *petite* figure to its full height, her dark eyes flashing with indignation. "You are angry, Jacques," throwing her arms around his neck and looking up into his eye. "Promise me you will not resort to violence. I want you always to defend your own life, dear; but do not seek a quarrel, rather avoid it. This man Lewis is a sneak and a coward. The next time he calls unmask his villainy, and order him out of the house. If he won't go, order some of the black servants to throw him out."

Jacques Flournoy looked down on the little woman. "You are right, Ivy," he said. "I promise you never to shoot, except in self defense," and leaning over he kissed the white forehead tenderly.

Lillian turned away, vexed. "I wish Doctor Balmaine were here," she said, poutingly. "He can hit a half dollar four times out of five, at thirty paces;" after

which speech she walked out of the room, shaking her golden head angrily. Just then the clattering of a horse's hoofs was heard outside. Jacques Flournoy went to the window and looked out. Braxton Lewis was walking up towards the house, having dismounted from his steed.

"Leave me!" said Colonel Flournoy to Ivy.

"You will remember your promise?" she asked.

"I will," he answered, and she left the room. Hardly had Miss Nelson walked out, before the rector entered.

Colonel Flournoy did not move from the window. His face was pale, and his thin lips were firmly compressed, while his eyes seemed fairly to gleam, as he looked the unwelcome visitor squarely in the face.

Braxton Lewis walked toward the colonel, a smile playing around his handsome mouth, as he extended his hand. As his glance fell full on Jacques, the colonel slowly held up to view the Hites contract. The rector stood speechless. He could not move, and seemed frozen to the spot.

How had the colonel come into possession of the contract? Had Balmaine returned? Colonel Flournoy opened another paper, and held it up before the rector's eyes.

Braxton Lewis started back in affright and amazement. It was in his own handwriting; it was the identical letter written by himself to Blow, in which he had not only wished the death of Colonel Flournoy, but had advised the editor of the *Bugle* to assassinate Doctor Balmaine.

Here was proof enough to hang him. He stood unmasked.

"Lost! lost! the game is lost," stammered the rector.

"Yes, lost, you infernal scoundrel!" roared Colonel Flournoy; "leave the house this instant! Braxton Lewis, mark my words well; if you ever cross my threshold again, I shall kill you. Leave now, sir, and never show your miserable face again. Go!"

The rector did not say a word but, quietly picking his hat up from the table, he left the house, mounted his horse, and rode away.

The game he had been playing for so many years was lost. Should he return to Greenwich Court House? Never! He had nothing to leave behind but his debts, and the anger of Cræsus Hites, and then, perhaps, Balmaine had returned, and knew of the Blow letter. So he turned his horse's head due south, and left Clark county forever.

A few moments after the rector had departed, Aunt Janet entered: "Has Lewis gone for good?" she asked.

The colonel nodded his head in token of assent.

"Well, I never was more astonished in my life, than when the girls told me about the scandalous conduct of Lewis. I tell you what, Jacques, I'm losing faith in the ministry. What's the world coming to? If the shepherds go astray, what's going to happen to the poor sheep? However, I reckon the sheep were created before the shepherd. So handsome, and such a hypocrite, and he made such lovely prayers. It's enough to make angels

weep!" and the old lady wiped her eyes once or twice, and sneezed feelingly on her yellow bandanna handkerchief. "What's the family coming to?" she continued. "Look at Lillian, she is still dead in love with that horrid Yankee officer. The idea of a Fairfax marrying such a mudsill! How people will talk, when they hear of it."

While Aunt Janet was speaking, Ivy and Lillian entered the room: "Has Lewis gone?" they both queried, in one voice.

"Gone! never to return," said Jacques.

"I'm so glad!" cried Lillian.

"Have you heard the news?" asked Jacques. "No? Well, then I must tell you. Our troops retire from Greenwich Court House to-day. The Federals are advancing in force, and, by to-morrow, Major Atkins will be once more in command of the town."

Miss Fairfax's face beamed with delight at this announcement. She ran to the colonel and kissed him, then she kissed Aunt Janet, then she kissed Ivy. She danced up and down the room, clapping her hands with joy: "Oh, my Yankee major! My darling Bob! He's coming back, and shan't go away again without me!" she exclaimed.

The colonel and Ivy laughed.

"Lillian, you are a little fool," said the old lady, severely.

"I know I am, but I'm in love," answered her ladyship.

CHAPTER VIII.

What has become of Doctor Balmaine?

Greenwich Court House had settled down once more under Yankee rule, and the stars and stripes floated over the town-hall. The warm, misty vapors of October's Indian summer hung lazily about the peaks and crags of the Blue Ridge, while the sun shone like a red ball of fire through the golden haze that dimly o'ershadowed everything. Balmy, dreamy, languid days, when too much exercise was irksome—cool, crisp, frosty nights, when a heavy blanket felt comfortable.

The forest-trees gloried in their gorgeous robes of scarlet, orange, and purple, while the hemlock, spruce, and pine, on the mountain-sides, gave a background of royal emerald-green. The quail whistled in the stubble-fields of the valley; the squirrel barked at the passers-by from the oaks on the mountain road-side; at night, the weird 'honk' of the wild goose—sure harbinger of approaching winter—could be heard high above the steeples of the town, flying from its summer home in the far-off North to its winter quarters in the region of perpetual sunshine.

Autumn still lingered in the lap of summer, and yet

Balmaine had not returned. His little cottage was tightly closed, with its front porch covered an inch deep by the red dust from the pike. Where was Balmaine? This was a question that sadly puzzled the gossips of Greenwich Court House. That he was alive and safe somewhere in the North was certain; that he had lingered for some time at Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, was well known, for he had written to Father Burke from that point. In return, the priest had written the doctor a long letter, in which were the full details of Colonel Flournoy and Ivy Nelson's wedding. Father Burke had been one of the guests at Belvoir Castle, at the marriage ceremony, much to the astonishment of the towns-people, and had also been the recipient of marked attention from Aunt Janet on that festive occasion.

That a Catholic priest should attend a Protestant wedding was thought to be exceedingly strange. It was said by people, who professed to know (what town is not full of such?), that Randolph Nelson had become a convert to the Church of Rome a few days before his death. Grandma Wadlington and Miss Hannah Dobson first made this wonderful discovery. Had they not found it out from the servants of York Hall? What more reliable source of information can there be than the kitchen? Did not Jeptha Brown, Nelson's negro cook, tell Miss Dobson that, three days before her master's death, Father Burke had called and spent some time with the invalid—that she, Jeptha Brown, had carried, with her own hands, two extra candles to Mr. Nelson's room. This reliable

female 'contraband' also averred that there was a strange odor lingering in the room after the departure of the priest.

"Foah God, Miss Hanny," said Jeptha, "I swah dat Mass' Nelson's room dun smell like the Cath-lick meetin' house, it did. It smelt like sulpha, or some udder debblish ting."

When the spinster, Hannah Dobson, related this to Grandma Wadlington that ancient lady took another dip of snuff, and looked wisely over the top of her broad-brimmed spectacles; then, closing her "Wesley's Hymn Book" with a slam, she looked straight at Miss Dobson, and said:

"Hanner, you ah an unedecated gal in matters of religion, you ah. That thah priest, I'm shuah, wah giving Randy Nelson the last sackryments of the church, or why should a dyin' man need extray candles, eh? The smell that Jeptha smelt wah insense, which the priest wah aswingin' about in a sensar. Do you know what a sensar is, Hanner? No? Well, it's a brass tin-cup, kivered ovah with pewtah saints, crosses, virgins, and sich. It's kinder holler inside, as it wah, and they put a piece of insense inter it, touch a match to her, and, fizz! she goes off. Then the priest swings it around, and makes a stinkin' smoke. I tell you what, Hanner, I've got a good mind to go back to the Methodist church. I only joined the 'Piscopal because it wah moah high-toned. But I miss camp-meetin's and love-feasts. When I see sich wimmin as Janet Flournoy, a pillar in All-Innocents,

cavortin' and galavantin' around with a priest, it looks as though the 'Piscopal church wah goin' ovah to Rome; it does, shuah."

Here Grandma Wadlington took off her glasses, and, taking another dip, shook her head sorrowfully. Yes, it was evident to these ladies, that Father Burke had made a convert of the late Randolph Nelson, or why all this censer and candle business?

Miss Dobson then recalled the fact that she had met Burke going to York Hall on that occasion, and had noticed that the priest's coat-tail pockets looked bulgy. It was now evident on what part of his person Burke had hidden his censer. What more proof was needed to make out a clear case?

The truth of the matter was, that Father Burke had sealed up some documents for Nelson with red wax, and had afterwards carried the same home in his pocket. Hence the explanation of the candle, incense, and bulgy coat-tail.

When Father Burke heard the story of Nelson's alleged conversion, a roguish smile played over his round face. It was noticeable, however, that he did not contradict the story, but allowed Grandma Wadlington's statement to circulate freely, thus showing he was not lacking in church policy.

As Aunt Janet had not been near All-Innocents church since the abrupt departure of Rev. Braxton Lewis, some weeks before, it was evident, from the frequent visits of the priest to the castle, that she, too, was about to become

a convert to Rome. The disappearance of Lewis was explained on the theory that he was heart-broken at the unseemly conduct of his favorite parishioner. Some people even went so far as to hint that the rector had made way with himself.

The arrest of Croesus Hites, his trial and subsequent imprisonment at Fortress Monroe, was said to be due to the machinations of Father Burke, who seemed to be on terms of closest intimacy with Major Atkins. Aunt Kitty Swearingen "wahnded whah Doctah Balmaine wah. Thah's Janey Harrison down with fevah; Ed. Barnett's baby dyin' with influenzer; poor Bush Donald's leg needs ampertatin', owin' to that thah ball he got at Gettysburg. The hull town will die off, if the doctah don't hurry back. Sich young saw-bones as Rutherford Morgan and Howard Ruddles can't doctah me, shuah!" and the old lady slapped her knee violently, "No, sah!"

What had become of Balmaine? His whereabouts at that time was a mystery to even Father Burke, for the priest's last letter to the doctor had remained unanswered. What had become of Balmaine? Balmaine was in Europe.

The strange train of circumstances inducing the doctor to go abroad can be told in a few words. Balmaine, tired of Chambersburg after a sojourn of a few days, had concluded to leave the place. Where should he go? An idea struck his fancy and pleased him so much that he concluded to act on it. Why not go to Philadelphia? He had not been in the Quaker City since

some thirty years before, when, as a medical student, he had attended lectures at Jefferson College. So, selling his horses, and finding a situation for his colored boy, the doctor started on his journey. He was bent on revisiting the scenes of his youth, and renewing once more the reminiscences of his young manhood. The recollection of happy days "lang syne," came back to him, with all their rough and hardened points softened and toned down by the lapse of time. Happy! happy student days, spent in wandering through hospital wards, studying the protean manifestations of disease; when it was delight, to see a limb amputated; and joy intense to witness the removal of some huge malignant tumor! Days spent in listening to the lectures of learned professors who professed more than they knew, and knew little of what they professed; the erudite Sangrados of an epoch happily passed. And the nights! Happy nights, when the students used to congregate in the dissecting room. How they smoked, chatted, laughed and sang, right in the awful presence of Death; while the bright, keen scalpel glittered as it delved for the origin and insertion of muscles, the course of arteries, and the track of nerves. Nights spent with staring, eyeless, hideous skulls, and bloody cross-bones. But the students sang on, and joked, and chatted merrily; an unthinking, careless, reckless, kindly set of good fellows.

What a thin, lanky, awkward, shambling crowd of men they were, to be sure, in their ill-fitting clothes,

unkempt hair and beards; a restless lot of perturbed spirits, with just enough money to pay their college expenses, and a little left over after graduation to buy a pair of saddle-bags and a small stock of medicine. And had they not all parted in friendship, and scattered north, south, east, west, never, in most cases, to meet again? Harris Balmaine had been one of them. If the sunshine of former years came back to the doctor, in this connection, there was another still happy and yet unhappy link that bound him to the Quaker City. Balmaine had had his little romance, and it was the romance of a medical student's boarding-house. What medical student is there who does not remember his impecunious and widowed landlady, with her one, two, or three fair daughters? Medical students seem to follow certain instincts when seeking for a boarding-house. In the first place the landlady must be a widow. In the second place she must have one or more daughters. In the third place no boarders must be taken except medical students. There is a great advantage in this arrangement, and it is a sublime wisdom prompting it. Supposing they are kept at the hospital past the usual hour? The meal is hot and waiting for them, which would not be the case if there was a mixed class of boarders, desiring meals at regular hours. Supposing they wished to discuss medicine at the dinner table? Medical men will differ in regard to theory and practice, and it's not always pleasant to have outsiders hear the frank discussions carried on, as an outsider might

come to the conclusion that there was more theory than fact in medicine, all of which would tend to lower the dignity of the profession. Supposing some lawyer, or clergyman, or tradesman, or mechanic, should board in the same house with your medical student. They might become rivals for the kind attentions of the landlady's daughter. Don't you see? That would never do, as the intentions of the former class of men might be serious; the intention of the medical student is rarely ever so: he is too poor to think of marrying. Nevertheless, he is about as fond of courting as the average unprofessional male biped. He likes to fancy himself in love, for fancy is about the only thing he has to live upon.

For this reason, and others equally as poor, a medical student is very *exclusive* in his notions; and, as his whims must be humored, we find, seemingly owing to a divine dispensation of Providence, in every large city having medical colleges, certain kind-hearted landladies make a specialty of boarding embryo physicians. In fact, such places of resort become part and parcel of the college, and your medical landlady is often better known, and more admired, than is the Dean of the Faculty.

These medical landladies are generally a quiet, patient, forbearing, motherly set of women, whose chief aim in life is to become mother-in-law to a physician. It is a sad commentary on the fickleness of the medical student, that these same good women very seldom succeed in their intentions. Year after year goes by, class after class

scatter, Martha and Tabitha become *passé*, and finally condescend to take an invalid clergyman, or a clerk on a small salary, as a last resource. With hopes broken and blighted, the poor landlady closes up her house (for, in the absence of daughters, your student forsakes her), and becomes an attendant in the hospital, or a monthly nurse, for medical men and medical talk have become second nature to her. Sometimes the medical landlady pines away, dies of a broken heart, and is wafted to those realms of everlasting bliss, where to-morrow's hash is undreamt of, and medical students can never enter. Such sad cases are, fortunately, rare.

Harris Balmaine had a tender spot in his heart for medical landladies, one especially, Ruth's mother. Who was Ruth? The daughter of Balmaine's Quaker landlady; and he cherished her memory for her daughter's sake. It was the same old story; quiet flirtation at first, mutual regard, warm friendship, then, alas! then an undeclared love. He was a poor young man; she, a poor young girl. They had loved and parted.

Three years rolled by, after Balmaine's departure from Philadelphia, and he had worked himself into a paying practice. Then he wrote her a letter; but received no answer. Ruth Embry had become Mrs. Ruth Taylor. Harris Balmaine never loved again. What had become of Ruth he knew not, although he often wondered. It was the remembrance of something else besides his student days that led Balmaine to visit the Quaker City. So he went, taking with him all the ready money he had,

some two thousand eight hundred dollars in gold. When he arrived in Philadelphia, the first thing he did, was to convert his gold into greenbacks; then he inserted a card in one of the daily papers. This card was short, it read:

"Wanted.—A Virginia gentleman wishes board in a private family. Apply, stating location and terms, to H. B., room 249, Continental Hotel."

He never thought for a moment how such an advertisement looked; he might have said simply "a gentleman" or, stretching a point, "a gentlemen from Virginia," but, no, he wrote, "*a Virginia gentleman.*" That was a title he was prouder of than even the "M. D." after his name. He had that strong sectional pride that time will never eradicate from the native of the Old Dominion.

The day after this advertisement was inserted Balmaine received a dozen answers to his communication. Hiring a cab, he started out to visit the various persons who had intimated a disposition to take him as a boarder. As it was a pleasant morning, the doctor concluded to visit the most distant point first, for he thought a ride would be enjoyable, so he directed the driver to take him out to upper Broad street.

Balmaine leaned carelessly back in the carriage and puffed his cigar. "What vast changes have taken place in this town, in the last thirty years," thought the doctor. "Almost all the old landmarks are gone, and I am, indeed, a stranger. Gone, gone, all gone!" and he sighed, wearily.

After a long ride, the carriage finally drew up in front

of a modest little house, which set back from the street, and was half hidden by the shrubbery and trees that surrounded it. Balmaine alighted, entered the gate, walked up to the door, and rapped with the old fashioned knocker. Presently the door opened, and a lady appeared.

At the first glance Balmaine noticed she was attired in the garb of a Quakeress. Then his eyes met hers, and they both stood dumbfounded. Time, relentless time, had wrinkled Balmaine's face, and streaked his hair with many a silver seam. Time, kindly time, had touched her with gentle fingers. The same clear pink and white complexion, with scarcely a wrinkle; the same soft, brown hair, smoothed carefully across the high forehead, and surmounted by a prim cap; the same clear, lambent, dove-like eyes.

She was the first to speak. "Is it thee, Harris?" She extended her little white hands, and he clasped them fervently. A crimson blush o'erspread his weather-beaten cheek.

"Why did I ever leave her," he thought, and was strangely embarrassed by feeling his own unworthiness.

"It's I, Ruthy: I beg youah pawden, Mrs? Mrs?"—

"Taylor," she answered, and dropped her eyes.

So it was as he expected. She had married. Could he blame her? Still, a sense of bitterness oppressed him. Had *he* not been faithful to his early love? "Mrs. Taylor." He repeated the name mechanically, while his lip quivered.

"Come in, Harris," she quietly remarked. "I fain would speak with thee."

So he entered the cheerful, cozy front room. She handed him a chair and he sat down. There was a long and painful silence, during which they both eyed each other curiously. At last he summoned up courage to speak; his voice was husky, and its unusual tone frightened him.

"Ruthy. I—I—I beg youah pawden, Mrs. Taylor; I—I received a note from you, stating you had rooms to let."

She looked up, smilingly. "I did not know it was thee, Harris, or I would not have written."

Balmaine was taken aback. Could it be possible, that she regretted meeting him? Had she forgiven him? Still she called him Harris. How delicious that sounded, coming from her lips; it took him back to the good old times of thirty years before, and he felt young again. He turned away from her steadfast gaze and tried to study the patterns on the wall paper. "If her husband should come in now," he thought; he felt his cheeks burn, and longed to run out into the cool, open air. He was growing more and more embarrassed, and was biting his lips, then he abruptly rose to his feet. "I did not intend to intrude, Ruthy, I beg youah pawden, Mrs.—Mrs. Taylor," he said, pleadingly. "I'll go. I'll nevah return to annoy you again." He started towards the door as he spoke.

"Harris!" he paused. "Thee hast said naught to me of thy wife and little ones," she said reproachfully.

Balmaine walked back and took a seat again. "I nevah married," he said. "How could I do such a thing, when you wah the only woman I evah loved?" She winced under his answer. "There! the devil is to pay," thought the doctor. "What a scoundrel I am, to make such a speech to a married woman. I must leave this place, or I'll choke." His poor head whirled, and he grew dizzy.

"Thee never married?" she exclaimed, in a tone of surprise, and (must we say it?) of delight.

Balmaine felt reassured; he saw she was pleased. "No! How could I?" He repeated his remark, and was frightened at the feeling way in which he expressed himself.

"I married," she said, softly, watching his face closely to see what effect the remark would have on him. Under her Quaker garb she was, still, much of a woman. She sighed, after she had spoken. Now, there is a world of meaning in a sigh, but its different shades of inference should always be rightly interpreted.

"She is not happily married," thought Balmaine, and he sighed, too—perhaps from sympathy, certainly, not from regret. "And youah husband and children?" he asked, in a quick, eager, impatient tone.

The mild eyes suffused with tears, and she averted her face: "He died ten years since, and—and God never hath blessed me with little ones," she answered.

Balmaine's heart beat fast and high; the hot blood burned as it coursed through his veins, while every nerve

in his body seemed to tingle: "So *he* is dead!" he said, trying to throw a mournful pathos into his words, but failing completely. "So he is dead? I feel very, very sorry for you," sympathetically.

Sorry! Oh, Harris Balmaine, how could you tell such a downright lie? However, let us hope that the recording angel, who is said to put down every falsehood told in this world, may have forgotten to score *that one* against the doctor.

So she was a childless widow? Was ever man so happy? Who can express the feelings of Balmaine at that moment? Love's bright sunshine burst out through the cloud that had o'ershadowed his heart for so many years, and its refulgence dissipated the darkness of his bachelorhood forever. Oh, happiness! oh, joy! all the sweeter after his patient waiting. He moved his chair toward her—he clasped her little hand; she made a feeble—very feeble attempt to get away, but he detained her: "Ruthy!" his voice trembled with passionate emotion, "Ruthy! darling! can I come back—will you love me?"

"I have *always*, *always* loved thee, Harris," she replied, and her little head drooped on his shoulder.

What an admission for a woman to make, and she had been married, too. How many—many women there are who feel that way towards some old-time lover. We do not always marry those whom we love.

Balmaine took the accepted sweetheart's privilege, his *first kiss*. All she said was, "Harris! Harris! thee is very naughty."

Need we tell how, after discharging his cabman, he spent the entire day with Ruth? How they talked over their past lives, and how the wedding day was set for the very next week?

When he left her that evening, his last words at parting were, "Ruthy, you shall have youah diamond ring to-morrow night."

"Then," she said, "art thou so rich, Harris, that thou canst afford to buy such worldly baubles? No! Let it be a plain gold band. I will take no other. Thou forgettest, I am a Friend."

"As you will, Ruthy." He kissed her. "Good night," and he was gone. Then she locked herself up in her own room, and fairly cried for happiness.

It was late that night when Doctor Balmaine reached the Continental Hotel, and its corridors were almost forsaken. He was famishing for a smoke; so, taking a cigar, he went into the reading room, and was soon lost in a deep reverie. He had been sitting there for some time before he became aware that two strangers were standing near him, talking.

Said one of these parties to the other, in a low tone, "Did you buy in all the 'Banana Zone Railroad' stock?"

"Yes! and sold it out again. We must have cleared twenty-eight thousand dollars on that transaction," answered the individual addressed.

Balmaine's ears were strained as he listened. Evidently these two men were stock speculators.

The doctor had often heard of such animals, but had never seen one before, so he looked out of the corner of his eye. One of the parties was a dapper little fellow, dressed in the loudest possible style, wearing an abundance of jewelry, including handsome diamonds. The other man was tall and thin, plainly clad in black, and looked more like a clergyman than anything else.

Directly, the tall man said to his partner: "I got a big point from Tom Scott, this morning. He's in it heavy. To-morrow we must put up all the margin we can raise in the Laylow and Winem Steamship stock. We can clear twenty-five thousand dollars on every one thousand dollars we put up, that is, if we sell out at the right time. Scott's going to bull it heavy for two days, but be sure and unload by day after to-morrow, or we are gone coons."

"Speak lower," said the party addressed, looking, furtively, at Balmaine, who, up to this time, had been unnoticed, "Wonder if he heard you?"

"No!" said the other, "What if he did? He's nothing but a Western country merchant. Don't you see his slouch hat and his cowskin boots—pheu!" and laughing in an amused way, they walked out of the room.

Balmaine puffed at his cigar, and pondered: "Points, margins, Winem Steamship, unload, twenty-five thousand dollars for every one thousand dollars. Not a bad thing," muttered the doctor, who had read the newspapers all his life, and had an idea what to do.

He went to bed, finally, but could not sleep. Should he speculate, just once, in stocks? He concluded to risk two thousand dollars of his greenbacks on a margin.

He rose bright and early next morning, went to a Walnut street broker, and put up his money on the "Laylow and Winem" stock, after which he spent the day with Ruth. The morning following he called at his brokers.

"How's Winem's this morning?" he asked, anxiously.

The broker's face was radiant with delight. "Way up in the clouds; you are a rich man," he replied.

"Have you sold?" queried the doctor.

"Not yet," said the banker.

"Sell at once," ordered Balmaine.

In an hour the good-natured broker returned. "Here's a check for \$68,000, Mr. Balmaine." The doctor tried to appear cool; in fact, he shivered. "Won't you try your luck at the Tripemup and Bustemhigh Mining Stock?" asked the broker, rubbing his hands together gleefully. "It's a big thing on ice, Mr. Balmaine, I assure you."

"Let it slide, then," said the doctor, with a laugh.

"No moah of youah fancy stocks for me; I'll invest this heah money in Uncle Sam's bonds. Give me this amount in 5-20's." Ten minutes later he walked up Chestnut street, with his pockets full of Government bonds. Truly the blind goddess had been beneficent to the Virginia refugee, and, as he walked toward Ruth's home that bright morning, Balmaine felt as if he were a

millionaire. When he entered her house he quietly handed her twenty-five thousand dollars worth of bonds. She was perfectly astounded at the magnitude of her wedding-present.

"Where did thee get so much wealth from, Harris?" she inquired.

"From margins," he replied.

"And who is this Margins?" she asked, innocently.

"Margins," said Balmaine, with a smile, "is a very near relation to ante-up."

"Thee has never spoken to me of thy aunty Upp," remarked Ruth, reproachfully.

"You will nevah know either her or margins," answered Balmaine, "they are both dead. We won't speak of them any moah," he answered, gravely.

She thought he might have suffered untold grief on account of his relatives' death, so she never mentioned the subject again. She always thought that the money had been inherited by the doctor. Like a wise man, he allowed her to think just as she pleased.

It was arranged that they should go to Europe on their wedding journey. "We have plenty to live on until the wah is ovah. When that happy day comes, we can go back to old Virginny," he remarked.

So they were married. Need we go into the details of the wedding? It was a quiet affair. An account of it would be very uninteresting. Suffice it to say, that both the high contracting parties were very—very happy. They sailed abroad, and spent their honeymoon under

soft, Italian skies. Balmaine was so entirely wrapt up in Ruth for the time being, that he delayed writing to Virginia; in fact, he became very forgetful, never thinking of Ivy, of the Fairfaxes, of the Flournoys, or of Greenwich Court House. When he reached Rome, the Doctor remembered Father Burke. Balmaine concluded at once to see the Holy Father, the head of the Church. He sought a private interview with the Pope; his idea was to have Burke made a bishop.

"I'll try and lobby his appointment through," said Balmaine to the American Consul, with whom he conversed in regard to the matter.

The Consul leaned back in his chair and roared with laughter. "You can't do much lobbying in the Vatican," said he.

"If I could only talk to the old man alone, sah," persisted Balmaine. "I know I could coax him to make Burke a bishop. I tell you, sah, he's too good for a one-hoss priest."

Need we say that the doctor completely failed in his attempt to secure a private interview with his Holiness? It was probably owing to this fact, that Father Burke was never made a Bishop. Balmaine left Rome and went to Paris, where he hired a French teacher, in order to study the language of Lafayette and Rochambeau, whose memory he revered, as all good Americans should do. So we leave the doctor and his wife abroad, enjoying themselves, while all the gossips of Greenwich Court House are wondering, "what has become of Balmaine?"

CHAPTER IX.

How Major Atkins happened to call at Castle Belvoir.

January 1, 1864, had come to Greenwich Court House like it had to the rest of the world. A happy New Year! Words of hollow mockery to Virginia—to the South. The morning broke on a wintry landscape, and the sun arose in a clear and cloudless sky. It was a bright, dazzling sun, but seemed totally devoid of warmth. It silvered the fretted and arabesque patterns on the frost-covered windows. It made the icicles, hanging on the cedars, scintillate and flash like so many diamond stalactites. It caused the drifting snow flakes to glitter and sparkle, as they were blown from the house top. The wind came down from the Arctic North, keen, nipping, biting, while its æolian notes moaned through the firs and pines of the mountain side, and whistled around the gables and chimneys of Belvoir Castle. It tried to creep into every nook and cranny, but in vain, for within the house all was cheerful, warm, comfortable.

The family were gathered around the wood fire, which crackled and blazed in the wide open hearth. Breakfast was just over. There sat Ivy Flournoy beside her husband, with her head reclining lovingly against the colonel's shoulder. Aunt Janet was smiling benignantly

on the two, as she knitted away on a blue-yarn stocking. Poor Lillian lay curled up on the sofa, close to the fire-side, a very inattentive auditor to Jacques, who was reading aloud to the little group.

Lillian had been pensive and sad for some months past, and, to-day, the very day of the year she ought to be most happy, was even more moody and melancholy than usual. Why did the world seem so dark to her? Why did she feel so mournful and dissatisfied with herself? The clear sonorous voice of Jacques, as he read from the *Pickwick Papers* some of the droll sayings of Samuel Weller, and the laughter of Aunt Janet and Ivy, who were enjoying the quaint humor of Dickens, grated harshly on Lillian's ear.

"How can they be so happy?" thought her ladyship, "when they know that I am so utterly miserable. They don't care for me any more; Jacques is perfectly wrapped up in Ivy, who thinks of no one but her husband, and, of course, it's natural; Aunt Janet cares for nothing but her two children. There's no one to care for me or love me now. No! not one. I wish I were dead."

A sense of profound loneliness came creeping over her, and she fondly nursed her fancied wrongs, and encouraged the morbid spirit of discontent, until she was buried in the deepest depths of bitterness. Then there arose in her heart a feeling of yearning, of inexpressible longing. Why could she not be happy like the rest of the world? If she only had some one to confide in; some one who would comprehend and appreciate her in-

most thoughts; some one—some one to love her. Oh! to be kissed, petted, caressed like Ivy; then—then she would give in return, her whole heart—her soul even. It was a selfish feeling, but a natural one for a woman to have when she happens to be love-sick.

To Lillian, in the midst of her unhappiness, a shadowy figure would ever and anon arise, only to be thrust out of sight again, for she had a true woman's delicacy. What right had she to hope?

He did not care for her. The affection she bore him was unreciprocated. Buried forever be the ghost of her love for Bob Atkins! Yet his ghost would still rise and haunt her, in spite of all she could do. Then she tried to hate the man. He was unworthy of her. For shame! The idea of a Fairfax falling in love with an unknown Yankee; a poor, miserable fellow, wholly unworthy of a second's thought. Why should she pass weary, heart-sick days, and sleepless, weeping nights on his account? Why should she pine for this man, who cared nothing for her?

Then her ladyship tried to become angry. Had he not neglected her shamefully? Why had he not called up at the castle? There he had been in command of Greenwich Court House for four long months, and had never been near her. If he really loved her, he would have found some way or means of meeting her. Men in love were men.

Then she began to feel the keen pangs of despair. "No, he does not love me," moaned the restless spirit

within her, while the very next instant Angel Hope buoyed her up again, whispering: "He does love you! He does love you!" How many a shipwrecked voyager on the ocean of sentiment has been floated by this same life-preserver Hope, until safely landed on the shores of matrimony, only to wish in later years that he or she had been drowned ere reaching shore.

Now, her ladyship had no earthly right to feel unhappy. Had she not a charming home, loving kindred, and everything to make life delightful? Lillian was discontented, nevertheless, for what woman can be cheerful with an unreciprocated love?

Madame Flournoy, Jacques and Ivy were all grieved and sad to see their little pet so disconsolate, and they often tried to cheer and comfort her, but failed utterly in the attempt. If the family could have devised any means to bring Lillian and the major together, they would have done so. The Yankee commandant was a comparative stranger to all of them. The colonel and Atkins had never met since the memorable morning at Hites' bank, nor had Lillian seen "her Bob" since that occasion.

The more Aunt Janet and Ivy thought over the matter, the more they were puzzled what to do. It was evident that Lillian was desperately in love with the Yankee officer. This was sad and mortifying. It was at one time proposed, by Aunt Janet, to invite Major Atkins to the castle; whereupon, Ivy suggested that he would not care to meet her husband. Then Colonel Flournoy

concluded he would call at Federal headquarters and apologize to the major for striking him.

This conclusion Jacques reached only after a long struggle with his pride, for, be it said to Flournoy's credit, he bore no ill will towards Atkins for the wounds received at Bradyville; but then, to think of a Confederate officer apologizing to a Yankee; that was galling indeed. It was all for Lillian's sake, however, and what would he not do to make the child happy?

Then Madam Flournoy and the colonel agreed upon the plan. It was about to have been put into effect, when Ivy offered an objection.

"Suppose the Yankee major does not care for Lillian, and would not care for her even if he had a chance to do so; what then?"

Horrible suggestion! and at the same time a reasonable one. The family pride revolted at this critical juncture. To invite the Yankee commandant to the house, and then not to have him fall in love with Lillian, was not to be thought of; so the plan was dismissed at once.

"It would make matters worse than ever," remarked Aunt Janet.

During those long four months, plan after plan had been suggested, but they all fell through; and Lillian and the major, as a consequence, never met. The family, in the meantime, clung to the hope that her ladyship would, in time, recognize the absurdity and disgrace of her position, and entirely forget the man with whom she had become so strangely infatuated.

However, if the Federal commandant had only called, he would have been welcomed, not only for Lillian's sake, but for the family's sake, likewise; for, in the latter case, they were all weary of the constant anxiety awakened by her ladyship's conduct. Aunt Janet was really alarmed lest Lillian might become insane. Had not her father taken his own life? The Fairfaxes were capable, when they did love, of loving too deeply. The old lady knew it was more than useless to reason with or chide Miss Fairfax for such foolish conduct.

"If Major Atkins would only contrive to be shot, and put out of the way, what a blessing it would be!" exclaimed Aunt Janet one day, in a tone that caused even Lillian to smile.

Ad interim. How was it with the heart of Major Bob Atkins? Ever since his return to Greenwich Court House, the gallant officer had been on the constant lookout for the object of his affections. It is safe to say that not a soul, clad in women's raiment, went by headquarters without receiving the close attention of the love-lorn warrior. But *she* never passed, and week after week went by, and still she came not. Then Major Atkins became sour, crabbed, morose, losing entirely that gay and happy disposition for which he was formerly so distinguished. The officers of his command came to the conclusion that the major was suffering from dyspepsia, the idea of his being in love having long since been given up.

It was Doctor Phelim O'Conner, the jovial Hibernian surgeon to the regiment, who made so bold as to speak to Atkins about his health:

"Arrah, Mayjur," he remarked, "yez same to be brakin' down intirely; yez have dyspepsia, I'm afther thinkin', and yez nade a tonic—somethin' to sthir up the gasthric juice and make yez strong."

"To the devil with your tonics!" said Atkins, savagely.

The crest-fallen surgeon sought consolation, after this rebuff, from his own favorite tonic, which he usually carried in a pocket-flask, hidden in his blue blouse.

Yes, Major Bob Atkins was desperately, madly in love; at the same time, he looked at the dark side of things, and felt that his love was unreciprocated. Cursed day, when he struck down the Confederate colonel, at Bradyville. He wished that Flournoy had killed him for Atkins had an idea, that Jacques would be the insurmountable barrier to his introduction at Castle Belvoir. Colonel Flournoy hated him, that was evident, or why had he struck him with a riding-whip at Hites' bank? His Yankee blood boiled with rage, as he thought of that occurrence; the next instant, he forgave the blow, for *her* sake. Yes, he felt that his situation was a hopeless one. Socially he had no standing in the town.

The people who visited the Fairfaxes belonged to the old aristocratic families of the county. This class of people looked down on the major with contempt; he was a "mudsill—northern hireling, etc." and while they had such a poor opinion of him, he returned the compliment with compound interest. It was useless for him to try and conciliate them; to stem the tide of Southern prejudice, as well might one strive to dam a mill-race with a

straw. Public opinion, in those days, would not tolerate a Yankee friend.

When in the deepest depths of despair the remembrance of the morning of their only meeting came back to him painted in vivid colors. Had she not called him "Dear R. A. from Toledo?" Why she should call him by his initials, he knew not. He wondered sometimes, where they had ever met. Could she have known him during his student days? This question he had tried to answer a hundred times, and failed: he could not remember ever having met Miss Fairfax before. He never once thought of New York, or of Madame Bonbon's: from which, it is evident, that a select school for young ladies is not charming to all young, single men. The more Bob Atkins thought over the matter the more he floundered and muddled his usually clear perceptions—at last, he gave up trying to solve the mystery; so he moped about, and was perfectly unhappy.

When the shades of night fell over Greenwich Court House it was the major's wont to stroll out to a bluff near the river, and there watch the lights that glimmered from the windows of the castle on the far off mountain-side. Was it not her home? Did not yonder roof shelter the woman whom he adored? When all the lights were extinguished save one, he imagined that one shone as a beacon to him, love's tempest-tossed mariner.

Yes! it twinkled from her room; and his fancy painted the golden-haired Lillian watching for him, waiting for him, like a second Hero. Then our young Leander

would exclaim: "Fool! Fool, that I am; what does she care for me?"

Now, a singular coincidence, that light *did* shine from Lillian's room, and she was thinking of him, and praying for him too; while every night her pillow was bedewed by the tear-drops which fell from her lovely eyes, as she sobbed herself to sleep, calmed by the lullaby of the zephyrs that played through the pines, seeming to whisper: "He will come! He will come."

Oh, sleep! comforting sleep! what solace thou bringest after the heart aches and weariness of the day, akin only to that eternal peace which comes to us all in the unknown, yet often welcome, hereafter.

So Major Bob Atkins would go back to his headquarters, and, before turning in for the night, would take the locket, containing Lillian's picture, and gazing lovingly at it, would press it to his lips. It will be seen from this, that these two fond hearts, though separated by distance, were still united in spirit. "Bosh! what sickly sentimentality!" exclaims some irreverent scoffer. True! but the world is full of it, and only they who love should read. If fate has separated these two lovers and buried them both in profound despair, it is our duty, as in pity bound, to extricate them from the trouble into which they have fallen. Here we have Cupid's giant powder, true love, the which needs but the spark of contact that chance has not yet given, then—then—we shall see all obstacles blown up, shivered, scattered; and, the *denouement* will be perfectly satisfactory to those who have

anticipated it from the start. The reader now sees the existing state of affairs on the morning of January 1st, 1864.

Return we now to the Fairfax fireside, where Lady Lillian lies dreaming on the sofa, an extremely uninterested listener to the story Jacques is reading; nevertheless, the reading is kept up until high noon, when Jacques throws down the book, stretches his legs, yawns, then rises to his feet. Walking over to where Lillian is reclining, Jacques leans over and kisses her; her ladyship opens her eyes which are red from weeping. "Why, dear! what's the matter?" asks the colonel, in a tone of tender solicitude. The only answer to his query is a half suppressed sob. "Don't grieve darling; it will be all right after while," continues the kindly Jacques, patting the golden head as he spoke. Sympathy is wasted sometimes, most certainly so in this case. Lillian feels a mingled sense of shame and anger; shame, because she has shown herself to be in love; anger, that her family recognizes the fact. Lillian wants no sympathy, she detests consolation. She rises from the sofa, pulls herself away from Jacques, and leaves the room, Aunt Janet looks at Ivy, and both women shake their heads in a significant manner. "It will do her good to take a cry," says Ivy Flournoy. "Do you speak from experience?" asks Jacques, smilingly, as he looks at his wife. "Perhaps," says the little lady, with some dignity, but blushing.

Jacques Flourney walks to the window and looks out; the weather is moderating, and the light snow

on the ground is thawing under the warmth of the noon-day sun.

"I think I'll take my gun and try and shoot a turkey or two," remarks the colonel.

"I wish you would," says Aunt Janet; "the game you brought the other day is almost gone. I'll go and tell Pete to fetch your gun and traps," and forthwith the old lady bustles out of the room.

Old black Pete has been the comrade of Flournoy in his hunting excursions for many a year. It is Pete who keeps the guns and fishing-tackle in order. It is Pete who carries the game-bag. Pete, the butler, as well as the armorer of the House of Fairfax.

Since Jacques lost his arm he has been in the habit of practicing with a light shot gun, one that he can use with one arm; and, the colonel has become quite an expert shot.

An hour later Flournoy and Pete were safely ensconced in a heavy copse of underbrush, at the Glades, a famous point for wild turkey shooting, about half a mile from Castle Belvoir. The place selected was in a glen, through which ran a rivulet, now frozen. Finding the tracks of the birds in the snow at this point, they secreted themselves. Pete at once commenced his decoy whistling. Every few minutes, the low, plaintive call sounded from the thicket. Ten minutes elapsed, and no return piping from the game sought for.

"Try once more, Pete!" whispered the colonel.

Pete pursed his thick black lips, and piped again, this

time with success; for, an instant later, a return call came from the opposite bank, not fifty feet from them; at the same time the under-brush crackled, and a black object appeared.

Bang! went the colonel's gun. There was a crashing of broken brush, a groan, a heavy fall, and from the top of the opposite bank tumbled a man, who struck on the ice below. Pete's eyes bulged out with terror, and his black skin almost paled, as he ran out of the thicket, closely followed by Flournoy. Together, they raised the stunned man up; when, horror of horrors! behold, it was the Yankee commandant of Greenwich Court House! . . . The colonel pulled out his brandy-flask, and poured some of its contents down the throat of Major Atkins, who, half strangled, revived sufficiently to open his eyes, and look upward. The first thing Atkins saw, was the face of the man whom he had disabled at Bradyville. Bob Atkins at once concluded it was an attempt to assassinate him, and he feebly tried to reach the revolver that hung at his side. The quick eye of Colonel Flournoy detected the movement, and he seized the major's hand.

"You are even with me now!" moaned the helpless Atkins.

"God forgive me!" said the colonel, solemnly; "it was altogether accidental, I assure you. I am very—very sorry, indeed."

"We dun thought you wah a turkey gobblah, shuah," interposed Pete, by way of apology.

Atkins smiled, and an instant later moaned with pain.

"Where are you suffering?" asked the colonel; "I am afraid I've put a good-sized load of shot into you somewhere."

The major sat up, supported on one side by the colonel, and on the other by Pete.

"Take a long breath!" said Flournoy; "any pain?"

"No;" answered the major.

"I'm certain you are hit in the leg or foot?" said the colonel, inquiringly.

Major Atkins lifted one foot.

"All right!" then the other, "Oh, oh!" an expression of pain on his face.

"Hand me your hunting-knife, Pete," said the colonel, who now cut open the major's blood-stained boot. The two gentlemen examined the wounded limb, as if in consultation; a few years of war had made them both amateur surgeons. "It's a bad looking flesh-wound," remarked the colonel.

"That's all. I'm glad it's no worse," replied the victim, thankfully.

Then Colonel Flournoy dressed and bandaged the leg, in quite a skilful manner. While thus occupied, the colonel asked:

"Did you come up on horse-back, Major?"

"No;" answered Atkins, "I came up afoot. I thought I'd try my luck at turkey shooting, this morning. I left two fine birds on top of the bank there. You popped me over so suddenly, and my head got such an infernal

bump on the ice, that I thought my days of turkey-shooting were over."

"Pete," said the colonel, "go and find Major Atkins' gun and game, and bring them back with you."

While Pete was scrambling up the bank, Jacques sat down by Atkins' side: "Major," he said, in a stammering, hesitating sort of way, "I owe you an apology, for striking you that morning at Hites. I was in the wrong. I, also, ask your forgiveness for this last, still more serious occurrence, and assure you, on my honor, that it was altogether accidental."

There! he had done it. His chivalrous Virginian soul rested easier. He had crushed his pride, and humbled himself to this Yankee foeman, for Lillian's sake, for his own sake; for he felt, somehow, that he had wronged Atkins.

The major blushed like a young girl: "You are too generous, Colonel," he said, in a voice tremulous with emotion, "the apology must come from me. Can you ever forgive me for the personal injury I inflicted on you?" he gazed at Jacques' half empty sleeve, as he spoke, "as for that affair at the bank; you were quite in the right. I had no business to look at the young lady, but then—but then," dropping his eyes, "you see Colonel, when a man's in love with a woman, he's apt to make a fool of himself."

Flournoy was delighted: "You are quite right," he said, "I was in love once myself, and so I can feel for you. Did I understand you to say you loved my cousin?"

"I love her better than my life," answered Bob Atkins, feelingly.

Colonel Flournoy extended his hand to Major Atkins, then he pulled out his pocket-flask, and filled the horn cup, which he handed to Bob, reserving the flask for himself, and raising it to his lips, he said: "Here's luck to you, Major!"

Now, there was a world of hidden meaning in that remark. Major Atkins felt that he had the colonel's consent to woo and win: "What a happy New Years, it is for me," he thought, springing to his feet. His spirit was strong, but his body was weak; he trembled, and would have fallen, had not Pete caught him.

"If you would only be kind enough to loan me a horse and buggy, I can drive to town," murmured the wounded officer, faintly.

"You will do nothing of the sort, Major!" said Colonel Flournoy, decidedly. "You must go to the castle with me; it's only a short walk. My wife and my mother will attend to you, while I go to town and bring up a surgeon."

The major feebly expostulated, but the colonel was firm. So the little party started for the castle; Major Atkins, hobbling along between Colonel Flournoy and Pete.

Now, in his heart the major was much pleased. "I shall meet her again," he thought, and he felt really thankful to the colonel for shooting him. After a short walk they came to the pike, and a few minutes later were

in sight of the house. It was then that Colonel Flournoy sent Pete ahead to say that Major Atkins had met with a slight accident, and that an extra plate had better be put down for dinner. Kind, considerate Flournoy, who did not wish to alarm the family at that time, especially his wife.

There was some excitement at Castle Belvoir when Pete delivered his message. Aunt Janet rushed to the kitchen to consult Chloe, the cook, about the condition of the larder. Ivy commenced to put the drawing-room in order. Lillian ran off to her own chamber to change her dress, and re-arrange her hair. All was in confusion, hurry, scurry, when the colonel arrived with his guest.

Aunt Janet received the Yankee officer with that stately air of dignity that only a Virginian matron of the old *regime* can assume. Ivy welcomed him cordially, not only as her husband's guest, but as a Union soldier.

The most comfortable arm-chair in the room was given to the major, and, while Colonel Flournoy started for town after Dr. O'Conner, the two ladies did their best to entertain the wounded officer.

Atkins was absent-minded, restless, uneasy. "Where is *she*," he thought. "Shall I never see her?" Suddenly the door opened softly, a rustling noise was heard; nearer and nearer it came. Bob Atkins half turned his head and there stood the original of his picture, the same queenly beauty he had seen at the Bank. The major

rose to his feet, he moved a few steps forward, and looked at her intently.

“Then, from her liquid eyes of blue,
A host of quivered Cupids flew.”

In the silent interchange of looks which followed, love expressed itself in all its eloquence. Lillian extended her little white hands, and the major grasped them. He tried to smile, but it was a ghastly attempt; then he turned pale, staggered across the room toward the sofa, and fell full length upon the floor. Pain, mental anxiety, and the loss of blood, were too much for Bob Atkins, so he fainted.

As he fell, Lillian uttered a loud wail of despair, and dropped on her knees beside the prostrate form, then she lifted his head up and brushed the brown ringlets from his cold, white forehead:

“Aunty! Aunty!” she cried, in a tone of agony, “save him! save him! don’t let him die!”

At the first alarm, Ivy ran off in search of some salts, and Aunt Janet in search of brandy. In the confusion of the moment, Lillian was left alone with the major:

“Oh, don’t die, darling—don’t die,” she moaned, then looking around for Aunt Janet and Ivy, and seeing that they both had left the room, Lillian leaned over and kissed the cheek of the unconscious officer. It was unwomanly, and, still, womanly. Cupid kissed his Psyche, and the handsome Apollo stole many kisses from the ruby

mouthed Daphne. If a man may steal a kiss, why may not a woman?

Perhaps it was Lillian's kiss that brought Bob Atkins back to life, or perhaps it was the salts and brandy, applied by Aunt Janet and Ivy, a few moments later. Be that as it may, directly the major opened his eyes and looked around, in a bewildered sort of a way; then his voice uttered a faint "where am I?"

"His mind is wandering," said Aunt Janet.

"O don't leave me! Don't leave me!" groaned the major, for the first time discovering that his head was supported by the arms of Miss Fairfax. It was useless for the major to have made such a request, as Lillian had not the slightest intention of leaving him. In order to quiet his unfounded fears, Lillian replied in an impassioned tone.

"I'll never—never leave you. There, now!"

Aunt Janet rose to her feet and started back in horror, her sense of propriety was deeply shocked.

"O! if you were only in earnest," pleaded the major, looking up into Lillian's eyes. "Oh! if you only knew how long I have loved you, and how I love you now. Will you be my darling? Will you be my wife?" he pulled her head down on his face and kissed her, while a "yes! yes, anything, but don't die!" escaped from her lips.

"Lillian! Lillian!" cried Aunt Janet. "Don't act in this disgraceful manner! Remember you are a Fairfax! A Virginia woman! For heaven's sake don't forget your

dignity. 'The man's crazy! I never saw such goings on in my life before.'

Then Ivy interceded, "She's only trying to bring him to, mother," she said, smilingly.

"But I tell you the man's crazy! He don't know what he is saying. He's wild with delirium," retorted Aunt Janet, sharply.

Bob Atkins turned his head and looked at Madam Flournoy, and said. "You are mistaken, entirely mistaken, ma'am. I was never more sane in my life. If this be delirium, I hope my whole future life will be passed in the same happy state. I love Lillian and have loved her for a long, long time."

"Yes! that's true," eagerly added her ladyship. "He loved me ever since the time I was a student at Madam Bonbon's school, in New York. Haven't you Major Atkins, I mean—I meant to say Bob?"

Then like a flash it passed through his mind that Lillian was one of the school girls, whom he used to meet on Fifth Avenue. "Yes! I loved her years ago, in New York," exclaimed the major, who did as most men would have done under the circumstances, i. e. told a down right story. "Yes!" he continued, "she was so young then that I did not think it right to make love to her. Besides, she did not care for me then?"

"Oh, yes, but I did, Bob. I loved you madly then, as I do now," cried the impetuous Lillian.

Ivy looked at Aunt Janet and smiled. Aunt Janet looked at Lillian and the major and frowned.

"Tut! tut!" said the old lady, reproachfully. "Well, in all my born days, I never saw such reckless love-making. Major, I should suggest the propriety of lying on the sofa; that is, if Lillian can lift you up."

It was astonishing to see how readily Bob Atkins helped himself to the sofa, where he patiently awaited the coming of Surgeon O'Connor.

It was thus that Lillian Fairfax was wooed and won. Need we go into the minute details of their love-making, and tell how the happy couple became more desperately in love from day to day, and how the course of true love seemed for once to run smoother and smoother, as they glided down life's enchanted river, and how each passing hour seemed to be sunnier, brighter, happier than the preceeding hour? No! no! we leave that to the vivid imagination of those who have loved, and who take pleasure in dreaming of the sensations of the past again.

In due course of time, thanks to the medical skill of Doctor O'Connor, and the careful nursing of the Fairfax family, Major Atkins convalesced, and returned to his headquarters in town. He was a very frequent visitor at Castle Belvoir, and his engagement was soon announced at Greenwich Court House. The affair was a godsend to the gossips of the village. War talk had become monotonous, and Cupid was more welcome than Mars.

Just about that time, Grandma Wadlington remarked to aunt Kitty Swearingen that "it wah skanderlous—to think of Lillian Fairfax bein' dead in luv with that Yank.

She had to send the cunnel out a gunnin' for him. Atkins had to be shot befoah they could coax him to go thah. What's all the gals comin' to, anyways?"

Whereupon, Hannah Dobson, sighingly said, "Miss Lill wah always romantick; I wish I wah, too."

In the Federal camp the subject of the engagement was the all-absorbing theme of conversation. Surgeon Phelim O'Connor said:

"Miss Feer-fex is bettther nor a tonic, bedad! Here's luck to to the purtiest woman in Virgee-nia! Sure byes, yez shud have sane the way she watched him whin he wos sick—just like an angel. Begorrah! if it were not for Bridget and me three gosoons, I'd thry and get her meself, so I wud."

Miss Fairfax received the congratulations of many friends, who praised her lover to her face and slandered him behind her back. For was a women ever yet engaged whose engagement pleased every lady? Is *he* not always too proud, meek, rich, poor, ugly, handsome, stingy, generous, virtuous, dissipated, mean, trifling? etc. In this case it was that Major Atkins was a Yankee.

During all that winter and spring Major Atkins was a daily visitor at the castle. He won his way into the family circle; for, with his musical talent, his kindness, politeness, and all those little accomplishments that mark the gentleman, the family at last came to love him—Jacques and Ivy as a brother; Aunt Janet as a son; Lillian Fairfax as a true woman ought to love a man who is shortly to become her husband. So everything was sunshine until May 8th, 1864, when Atkins received

his commission as colonel, and was ordered to join the Army of the West forthwith. It was in vain that the heartsick officer sent dispatch after dispatch to Washington City, asking for a furlough; but the answer came "No!" "no!" Should he resign when victory seemed finally to be within the grasp of the North? Never! Cursed be such a thought! Bitter as was to be his parting from his sweetheart, he felt that it must come. Should he marry her before leaving? That would hardly be treating her fairly. If he should die on the field of battle it was better to leave her a maid than a widow. In the meantime, to the grief of all concerned, came a notice to Colonel Flourney. Jacques had been "exchanged," and was ordered to repair at once to Richmond. We shall not attempt to describe the anguish, the tears, the bitterness of that parting. They both left on the same day, followed by the prayers of the now unhappy household. One went to battle again, for his dearly loved "Southland;" the other, to fight for the "Union." It was the last desperate year of the "war." Legion was to meet legion, and the iron game was to be played to its horrid end. Let the blackness of hell rest like a pall over that closing scene of blood until the first dawns of peace shall break over the new world, and the young Republic shall rise again, purified, regenerated, united eternally, after the fiery ordeal through which it shall pass.

O Liberty! What oceans of blood and tears thou hast cost through all the ages. Thy tears were woman's tears; thy blood man's, born of woman.

CHAPTER X.

Ring Merry Wedding Chimes!

Peace came like an angel to our once unhappy land. Disbanded, the citizen soldiers of the North and South, stacked their muskets, hung up their swords, dismounted their cannon, furled their battle flags, and quietly returned to home and kindred. The war was over, and the Union stood firmer than ever, baptized, as it was, by the best blood of the Republic. To the heroes of the Northland,—Honor! To the heroes of the Southland,—Fame! To the dead heroes, who fell on both sides, that eternal glory which crowns the victor over death. The unprejudiced historian of the future will tell of the deeds of valor performed by Federal and Confederate; the future poet will write a new Iliad, and sing the praises of these warriors of a later age; the future moralist will drop a tear over the Blue, over the Gray, and wonder why necessity has created such a thing as Civil War. It has always been so; it will ever be so—"we move in circles," and "history repeats itself."

By none was peace more heartily welcomed than by the people of the Shenandoah Valley. What if farm houses, barns, and fences were destroyed?—they were

only the handiwork of man, easily renewed, easily replaced. Nature remained the same unchangeable, indestructible thing it always has been. The soil was more fertile than ever, after its long rest. The grand old mountains still lifted their verdured slopes and lofty peaks heavenward. The bright, crystal waters of the Shenandoah danced and sparkled over the rocks, flashing in the sunlight, as they rolled onward toward the sea. The trees and plants bloomed, blossomed, and looked as beautiful as ever. The birds sang just as sweetly. The butterflies flitted about just as gayly. The bees gathered their winter store of honey as usual. What cared Nature for the evil doings of mankind?

"To work! to work! Let us regain what has been destroyed. Let us build over again, and build better," sang the busy human worker. So the music of the axe resounded through the mountain sides, and lofty pine and sturdy oak bowed their proud heads, and fell to mother earth. Once more the neat farm-houses and spacious barns were erected, the rich field plowed over, and the mellow soil turned to the ardent kiss of the summer's sun. War had one good effect on the inhabitants of the Valley; it took all the laziness out of them; they worked as they had never worked before. If the war brought freedom to the black, it also brought freedom to his white master.

It was on a morning in the early part of September, 1866, that Washington Bowky, late captain C. S. A. but now proprietor of the Jefferson Tavern, hearing the

rumbling of the Winchester stage-coach coming down Main street, jumped from his high perch behind his office desk, and, stretching his arms and yawning lazily, went to the hotel door, in order to greet any guest who might happen to arrive. In a moment or so, the heavy, lumbering vehicle drew up in front of the tavern, and five persons alighted therefrom. To say that Washington Bowky was delighted by this sudden inundation of guests, would be drawing it mild. It was very seldom that so many strangers came to town together.

The landlord ran down to the pavement to assist his visitors in with their luggage. He looked up to the top of the stage and beheld, with amazement, thirteen trunks and five boxes. Such a sight had never before been seen in all the annals of the Jefferson Tavern. Washington Bowky turned round and viewed the newcomers sharply; he at once came to the conclusion that his guests were distinguished foreigners on a visit to Berkeley Springs. His conclusion was more than strengthened by a remark made at that moment by a gentleman who seemed to be the leader of the party. This personage, a tall, well-built, portly individual, attired in the most *outré* fashionable costume of the period, and wearing heavy, chop whiskers *a l'Anglaise*, turned to a lady who was evidently his wife, and said: "Madame, ou ate l' ong-tong" Whereupon the lady, turning to a rather *petite* French *bonne*, who was hugging a small bundle tightly to her breast, remarked: "E-see! E-see! Mong Marry." "See'ate bong," exclaimed the tall man,

"Eh Bee-ann. Noo fay-zone no atray ah law veal dee Greenwich Court House." As the last three familiar words fell from the speaker's lips, Washington Bowky was much pleased, and murmured to himself, "Here's a Juke in disguise, and Greenwich Court House is all the same in Dutch." In the meantime, the other two men of the party commenced to assist the driver with the trunks.

"Prand Garde! Prand Garde!" shouted the tall man. "Voo casseray kel-key-shows."

"Non! Non! Monsieur, pas du tout," replied the other two foreigners.

The tall man, taking the lady's arm, entered the hotel, closely followed by the French nurse with her small bundle. Washington Bowky lingered outside for a moment, until the last trunk was taken from the coach, then he followed his guests into the house. The tall man had just written his name on the visitor's book. Washington Bowky scanned the signature with intense interest, and suddenly started back in astonishment, as he read:

"Harris Balmaine, M. D., wife, child and three servants."

The amazed landlord looked up and met the keen, quizzical glance of the doctor, whom he had not seen for five years. "My Gawd! Doctah, is it you?" he asked, "I declah to goodness, youah best friend would nevah know you. Glad to see you back, sah So youah married—wife and baby eh.?"

The two men shook hands warmly.

"Wash," said the doctor, "I went abroad while you wah off in the army. Allow me to introduce you to my wife, sah. Madam! permit me to introduce my friend, General Washington Bowky."

"Captain," interrupted the landlord, correctly.

"Only captain?" queried Balmaine, eyeing the empty sleeve, which hung dangling from Bokwy's left shoulder, "only captain, and aftah such a loss? Give me your right hand, Wash, again. You wah always a brave fellah. I always did like you."

"It wah for old Virginny," said Washington Bowky, cheerily. "I wah winged at Shiloh, Doctah."

"Thank Gawd the wah's ovah," said Balmaine, feelingly.

"I'm with you thah," chimed in the landlord.

Suddenly a loud yell rang out from the small bundle carried by the French nurse, and Ruth Balmaine rushed forward and clasped her child in her own arms.

The doctor laughed and said: "Wash, I forgot to introduce you to my son. Ruthy, show Captain Bowky the baby. Permit me, Captain! my son, Harris Balmaine, Junior," proudly.

"Does he speak English?" asked the landlord.

"No, sir; not a single word. He even cries in French;" it's the only regret I have about the boy, Captain; this thing of being French bawn, will prevent his evah being President of the United States. I used to lie awake and worry all night about it, but it can't be helped," sighingly, and the fond father placed his hand

on the baby's head, whereupon, the infant set up a loud squall.

"Harris! thee hurts the child," said Mrs. Balmaine, reproachfully.

"Is youah wife a Quakeress?" whispered Washington Bowky, noticing the 'thee'."

"Yes, sah;" answered Balmaine.

"I'd nevah have thought so, judgen from her clothes," said Bowky in a low tone, gazing intently at Mrs. Balmaine's elaborate French traveling costume.

The doctor laughed: "My wife's a Philadelphia Quakeress, you know," he said, confidingly, "and the Quakeresses thah dress differently from the balance of the Friends; they all get thah fixings from *Parry*, you know."

"I see, I see!" muttered the admiring Bowky.

"Washington!" exclaimed the doctor, "I'd like to talk to you longah, but the fact is my family are tired and hungry. Want breakfast and a good rest, you see. Let's have the best *sweet* of rooms, you have in the house.

"What's a *sweet* of rooms?" asked the puzzled landlord.

"Wash, I'm astonished at youah ignorance of the Gallic tongue! Give us the best rooms in the house, close togethah, adjoining one anothah. Thah! is that English enough?"

Need we say, that Washington Bowky did as he was requested. In less than two hours, Balmaine's arrival was known to all Greenwich Court House. and the whole

town was in an intense state of excitement over the news. Father Burke was the first caller, and priest and physician joyfully embraced each other, so happy were they to meet after their long separation.

Shortly afterwards, Colonel Flournoy, who was in town, hearing of the news called on the doctor. Jacques invited Balmaine and his wife up to the Castle that evening to the wedding reception of Lillian Fairfax.

"So Atkins got her aftah all," cried the delighted doctor. "Give them both my love and tell them I'll be thah. When did Atkins return?"

"General Atkins returned here a few days since, although he has been here off and on ever since he became engaged to Lillian. He will be a permanency now, as he and Lillian take possession of the old homestead, my mother still continuing to live with them. Ivy and I will move over to York Hall, and I shall manage my wife's plantation hereafter."

"Good!" exclaimed Balmaine. "You are all handsomely fixed. I've come back to farm myself, and have brought two French farm-hands with me. I bought the Hites plantation a few months since."

"What!" exclaimed Father Burke in astonishment. "Sure you don't own the Hites place, do you Docther."

"Yes, I do," replied Balmaine. "I met the bankah in 'Parry,' a few months ago. The old man was broken down and feeble. His son swindled him out of almost everything. He was hard up, and so I bought his farm to help him."

"You have not made up with the rascal?" queried Colonel Flournoy.

"Not exactly," said Balmaine, "but you see the wah's ovah. Yes, the Hites place is mine. I've got the deeds in my pocket. I suppose you have heard about Braxton Lewis?"

"No! what of him?" asked Father Burke.

"Why he's opened a gambling house in New Orleans, and young Croesus Hites is his partner."

"I always thought he had mistaken his calling," said the priest, dryly.

So the trio chatted for a while, and finally Burke and Flournoy left. All the forenoon there was a rush of people who called to welcome the doctor home.

The "*Greenwich Commonwealth*," which had supplanted the "*Bugle*" and was issued as a Daily, sent a special reporter up to the Jefferson Tavern, to interview the new arrival, and, at two o'clock issued an "extra." This article in full would be too long to transcribe, so we shall omit the stunning head-lines, and only cull a few choice paragraphs, to-wit:

"The citizens of Greenwich Court House were startled, this forenoon, by the joyful and astonishing intelligence that Doctor Balmaine had, at last, returned from his European tour," etc.

"The enterprising proprietors of *The Commonwealth*, with that unbounded liberality which has always distinguished this journal, at once sent Mr. Terrence O'Flighty, late of the *New York Herald's* reportorial staff, to interview Doctor Balmaine," etc.

"Balmaine has certainly a most *distinguished* appearance, and looks like Lord Russell, of the *London Times*, whom we knew, at a distance, some years ago," etc.

"The doctor was conversing in French with Father Burke, when we entered. Fritz Sprechnicht, the German barber, at the Jefferson Tavern, informs us that Father Burke and Balmaine both speak the French language beautifully, *without any accent*. Fritz ought to know, as he was born in Vienna, where French is the Court language," etc.

"Doctor Balmaine had just presented Father Burke with a magnificent painting for All-Saints church. This picture represents the 'Last Supper,' and is from the *atelier* of Raphael Angelo Moses, a talented young American artist, residing at Padua. We may be pardoned for a few criticisms on this picture :

"The portrait of Thomas, the beloved disciple, reminds us of Colonel Jeb. Berry, who stumped Clark county last fall for the Democratic ticket. It's a fine likeness of the old gentleman. The attitude of Peter is *striking*; he looks as if he were going to put a head on Judas. The coloring of Peter's hair is poor, and reminds one of Rembrandt's etchings. The flesh-tints of St. Paul's left ankle might have been more carefully worked; it is daubed after the manner of Correggio, Turner, Claude Verne, Guido, and the old masters.

"The English art critic, Ruskin, tried to buy this picture, as he wished to present it to Pius IX. The artist refused to part with it, however, until he met Balmaine,

to whom he sold his picture at half what the paint and canvas cost.

"Raphael Angelo Moses, who, by the way, is the nephew of Solomon Moses, our popular Main street clothier, (see advertisement next page), deserves the thanks of his admiring fellow-countrymen," etc.

"During the time Balmaine was abroad, he received distinguished consideration from the crowned heads of Europe; his passport was closely examined, every time he entered a foreign city," etc.

"Just at noon, Dr. Balmaine was serenaded by the Greenwich Brass Band. Selections were played from Beethoven's opera of Martha; Mozart's Bohemian Girl; Tannhauser's Sonnambula, and Balfe's Ninth Symphony. Greenwich Court House should feel proud of its musical culture," etc.

"Delegation after delegation poured into the rooms to call on the doctor; they all wanted him to run for Congress next fall; he declined to have his name used, as he has some family pride left," etc.

"Mrs. Balmaine looks young enough to be the doctor's daughter. She wears an elegant Worth dress, which must have cost at least four hundred dollars; her shoes are No. 3; we interviewed her French maid on these latter points. The baby weighs twenty-seven pounds; has not been weaned, and is now teething," etc.

All that afternoon *The Commonwealth* was read and re-read with avidity by the inhabitants of the town, for,

under the fostering care of O'Flighty, late of *The Herald*, Greenwich Court House had become a literary centre.

As Grandma Wadlington read the paper, for the second time, she remarked to Hannah Dobson:

"Hanner, look heah! Strikes me as how newspapahs now-a-days go peeking around too much into private mattahs. The ideah of tellin' how much Mrs. Balmaine's dress ah worth, and how much the baby weighs, and sich. It's simply skanderlous, Hanner! And the size of her foot, too!—why, none of us is safe from these heah reportahs. When I wah young, 'twant so—newspapahs wah more dignerfied then than they ah now, and we nevah thought of readin' 'em; and heah, I've done gone and read this skanderlous papah twice already! It's awful, Hanner!" and the aged dame, taking another dip of snuff, commenced reading *The Commonwealth* aloud for the third time.

Miss Dobson sat there and enjoyed it ever so much, especially that portion relating to Mrs. Balmaine.

About 4 o'clock, on the day of Balmaine's arrival, two gentlemen might have been seen on the front verandah of Belvoir Castle. These gentlemen were arrayed in full dress suits of black broadcloth.

"What time is it, Jack?" asks one of the party, a tall, handsome, bronzed-looking fellow, with a decided military air, sticking out in spite of his civilian costume.

"It's almost three o'clock," answered the party addressed, looking at his watch, "and we must be at the

church by five, sharp. "You begin to feel a little nervous, eh, Bob?"

"Well, yes; if I must admit it, Jack, I do feel kind of shaky," pulling his brown moustache, nervously, "how does Lillian seem to feel, is she frightened?"

"A little pale, but very happy, Bob. Old fellow, you must be ever so good to our little girl, for I never saw a woman so dead in love in my life."

"Did you ever see a man more in love?" queried the intended groom, blushing as he asks the question.

"Well, I must confess, you have always been pretty spoony, Bob," replies the other, with a laugh "I'll go up stairs and hurry the bride up. Mother and Ivy are ready. I tell you, old fellow, this business of satin, lace, orange blossoms and gauze, is a wonderful thing; one of the mysteries, you bachelors know nothing about. It takes a woman a long time to dress, Bob; however, I'll go upstairs and hurry them up," and Colonel Flournoy, rises from his chair and enters the house.

"Jack," cries Bob Atkins, "give Lillian a kiss for me. Tell her, I'm dying to see her—tell her"—Bob Atkins looks around, only to find his companion has retreated up stairs.

Bob sits musing, while a smile of joy o'erspreads his handsome face. So, this is his wedding day? His mind is filled with a hundred conflicting emotions. What a chain of curious circumstances have led him up to the present time.

At last she is his; in spite of war, enemies, and all. War! Certainly it has been a happy thing for him. "It's an ill wind that blows no one good."

In an hour Lillian will be his wife. His wife! How curious that sounds; how thankful he ought to feel; how thankful he does feel. Was ever man so blessed? The fairest, the purest, the noblest, the best little woman in all the Old Dominion. How he longs to see her; to embrace her; to whisper "darling." But, bye-and-bye; wait, fond heart, for bye-and-bye.

Upstairs, the dexterous black fingers of Nina, the colored maid, are deftly arranging the bridal veil over the head of the golden-haired Lillian. Miss Fairfax stands in front of the mirror; she never looked more lovely. How her heart beats with excitement; how her cheeks alternately pale and blush. What will *he* think of her looks?

"Mammy! mammy!" she cries to her dusky negro nurse, who stands one side admiring "Young Missus," "Please tell me, mammy, how I look?"

The aged negress rolls her eyes, "Why, chile, you looks jess like an angel foah God's throne, you do, shuah! —dems my sentiments, Miss Lil," whereat, Ivy and Madame Flournoy nod their heads approvingly.

The bride sighs; how she wishes the wedding were over. Cruel, cruel fate, that has separated her from Bob for the last three hours. Bob, her Bob; the handsomest, bravest, noblest man in the world. O! that her

head might be resting on his shoulder, so that she might say :

“ You are mine, darling ; mine, forever.” But, bye-and-bye ; wait, fond heart, for bye-and-bye.

The seats of All-Innocents church are packed and crowded by an expectant multitude. Dusky faces peer through the side windows, waiting—waiting the coming of the bride. The low, sweet tones of the organ fill the church, and the voices in the crowd are hushed. A rustle of lace and satin, the faint odor of orange-flowers and tea-roses, and the happy couple have passed up towards the altar. A murmur of admiration creeps through the throng. Hush ! The new rector, pale, scholarly-looking Clarence Grey, walks to the chancel. Profound silence. The beautiful marriage ceremony of the Episcopal church is performed. It is over. Higher and higher, grander and grander, swell the deep intonations of the Wedding March, and bride and groom sweep proudly down the aisle, followed by the blessings of hundreds. They are gone. The crowd surges out of the church, laughing, chatting, delighted. Lillian Fairfax is a Fairfax no longer ; she has become Mrs. Robert Atkins. Strange, isn't it, this wedding business ? Talked of for months, sometimes for years, over in a few minutes. The crowning event in every woman's life, an episode in most men's.

On horseback, in buggies, wagons and carriages, the guests climb the mountain-side, going to Castle Belvoir.

The maidens, youths, dames, dowagers, gentry, the beauty, and the chivalry of Fauquier, Loudon, Frederick and Clark counties. The castle is lighted up brilliantly. You can see through the window the forms of the dancers. Hark! Listen to the music. It is not the stately Lancers. It is not the last voluptuous strains of Strauss' latest waltz. Ah! no! no! Louder and louder, faster and faster the dear old familiar notes of the "Virginia Reel."

The bride and groom stand at the far end of the drawing-room, receiving congratulations. Colonel Flournoy, the host of the evening, rushes here and there, introducing his friends to the groom.

"General Atkins, permit me to introduce Major Cabell, late of the —th Virginia."

"Delighted to meet you," says the gallant ex-Confederate, grasping the ex-Federal's hand. "Allow me to congratulate you, General. Miss Lil, I wish you much happiness."

"Atkins, allow me to introduce you to my friend, Colonel Terry, late of the —th Maryland."

They bow and shake hands.

"Pleased to meet you, General Atkins; allow me to congratulate you, sah. Miss Lil, I wish you evah so much joy!" and so they go on. Bob is introduced to any number of bronzed and weather-beaten soldiers of the "lost cause." No sectional bitterness among these brave men—these soldiers. Ah, no! they leave that to the

politicians, to the rabble, who never shouldered a musket for either side.

Wilder and wilder rises the music of the Virginia Reel. Doctor Balmaine rushes forward to where the bride and groom are standing.

"Miss Lil, just one dance," pleadingly; "Majah Atkins—beg you pawden, General, I should say—I must have one dance with the bride, sah. Come along, Miss Lil! come along!" and he drags the bride off into the merry, laughing crowd.

"I'm dyin' for suppah, Hanner," says Grandma Wadlington to Miss Dobson; "I declah to goodness, I nevah in all my bawn days, saw sich goin's on befoah. Look thah, Hanner! See the way Janey Flawnoy's entertainin' that Fathah Burke, and neglectin' her othah guests—she's goin' ovah to Rome, shuah! Look! look thah! Jist see Miss Balmaine! How she ah flirting with General Posey. She, a Quakah and the mothah of a one yeah old baby. It's skanderlous, Hanner! How han'sum 'General Atkins looks. He reminds me of Commodore Wadlington, when he returned from Algeers. When ah they goin' to have suppah? Let's go and git a good place, Hanner."

So the wedding festivities go on until long after midnight, kept up in the ancient style of "Ole Virginny," by that same kind-hearted, generous, high-spirited, but peculiar race of people, whose ancestors settled on the Northern Neck over two hundred years ago.

The wedding party is over. The guests have all departed. The world is sleeping, and quiet reigns supreme o'er valley and o'er mountain side. The moon is sinking, its silvery crescent slipping down the far-off West. The clear sky is covered by a myriad of twinkling stars. Castle Belvoir stands dimly outlined against the hazy covered slopes of the Blue Ridge.

Farewell, happy hearts! Farewell, dear Virginia! and gentle reader, forgive this idyl of the Old Dominion.

THE END.



